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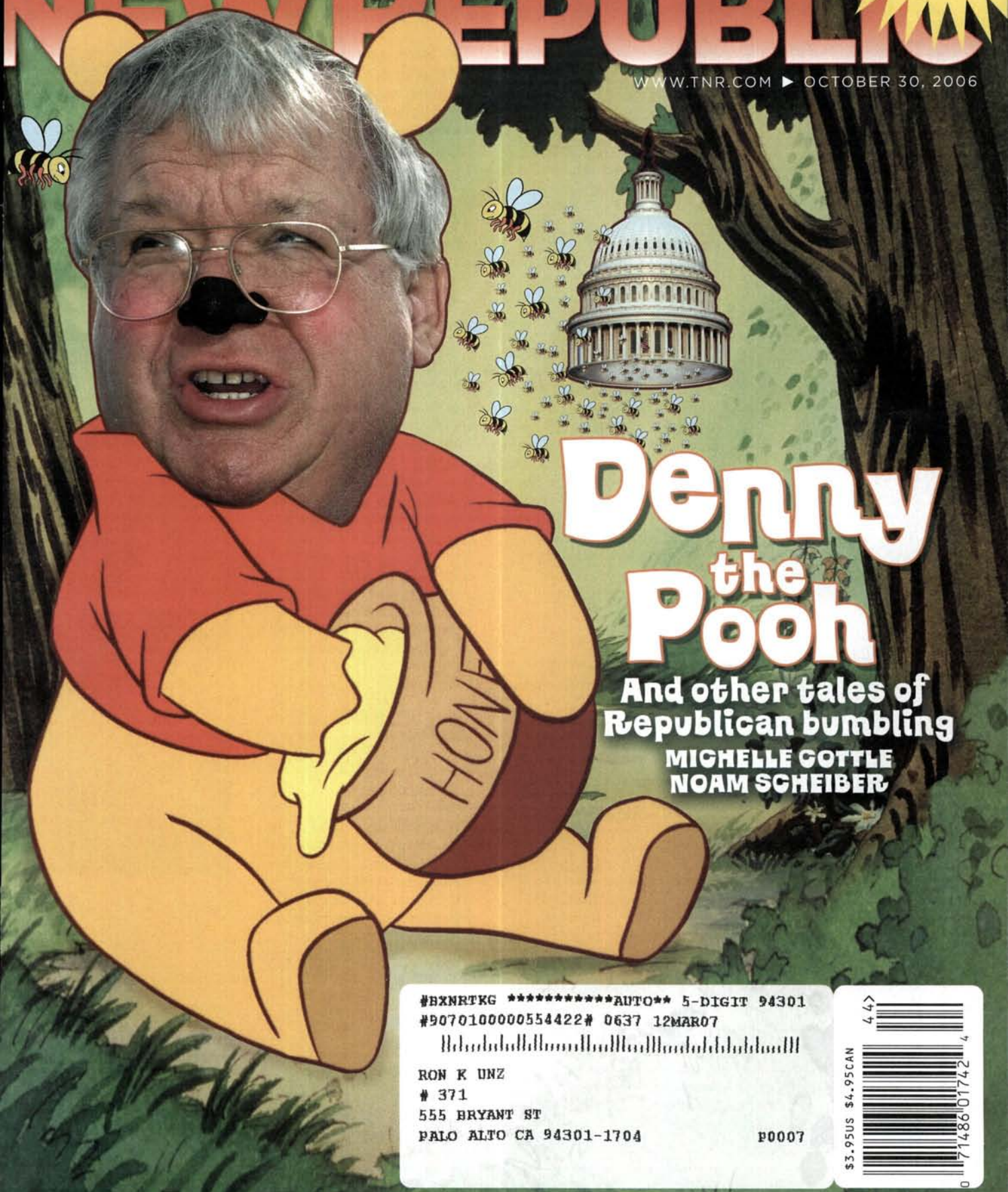

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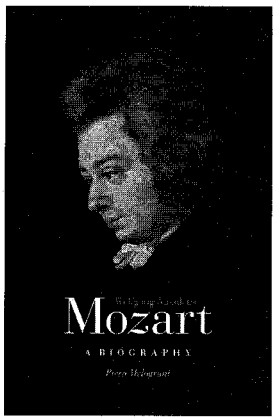

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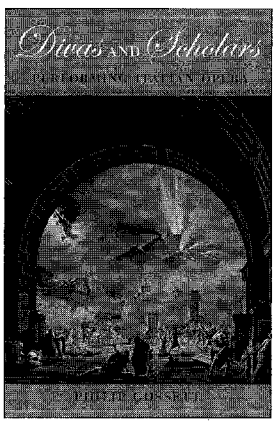

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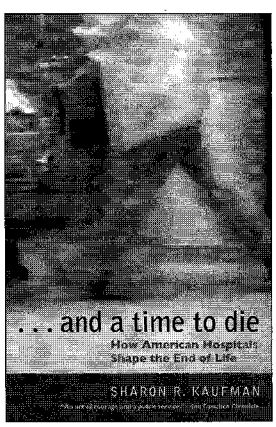

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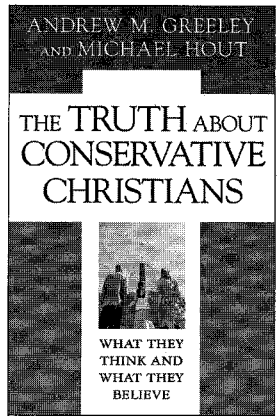

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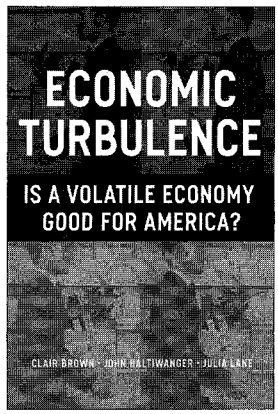

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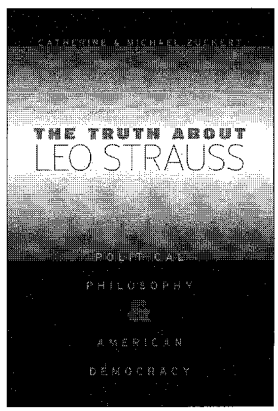

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OCTOBER 30, 2006 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUE 4,789 VOLUME 235

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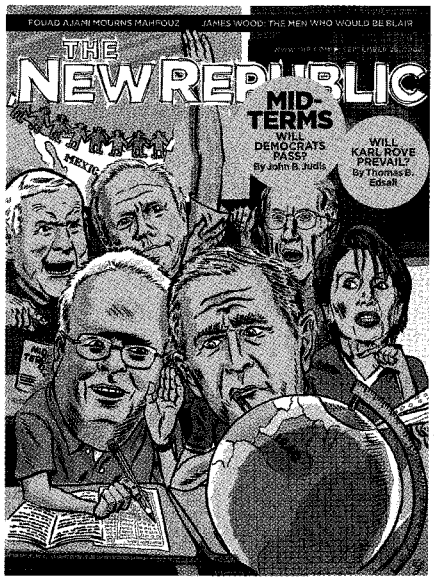
CORRESPONDENCE

MAJORITY FOOLS

THOMAS B. EDSALL IS ONTO SOMETHING when he writes that "the Democratic Party has become the political arm of the subdominant, while the GOP is home to the dominant groups in American life" ("Party Hardy," September 25). This, however, is not new; it's the basic story of U.S. politics since the Civil War. Until the Depression, the Democrats were (roughly) the party of the South in coalition with the urban North, while the Republicans were (also roughly) the natural governing party of "the nation" as a whole. Franklin Roosevelt and his followers brilliantly capitalized on the Depression—which occurred at the apex of the urban moment in American politics—to build a party of dependent interest and constituency groups. (His administration didn't do much to solve the slump, but it did put the middle-class urban intelligentsia front and center as the administrators of American public life, to the gratitude of historians, journalists, artists, and others of the class ever since.) The Democratic Party's coalition began to break up after World War II. With the exception of Lyndon Johnson in 1964 (in the emotional aftermath of the Kennedy assassination), no Democratic candidate for president has received the 51 percent of the popular vote that George W. Bush garnered in 2004 since Roosevelt did it in 1944—not Harry Truman, not John Kennedy, not Jimmy Carter, not Bill Clinton. (Not even Al Gore.) Democratic Congressional majorities persisted in the decades after World War II, thanks in part to gerrymandering (the party got 59 percent of the seats in the House as late as 1992 on only about 50 percent of the popular vote) and the willingness of Southern Democratic politicians to stay in the party of the Confederacy until their retirement. The great run the Democrats had, from the 1930s until 1994, depended heavily on the artifice of padded congressional majorities and the complicity of the old segregationist South, hard as it might be for today's blue-state liberals to accept. Significantly, the economy was strengthening in 1994, when the realignment that the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MID-TERMS
WILL DEMOCRATS PASS? By John B. Judis
WILL KARL ROVE PREVAIL? By Thomas B. Edsall

Democrats had long been able to skillfully avoid finally occurred. The Democrats are now basically back to being the party they were before the Depression: a coalition of disparate "minority" groups without much in common except their "outsider" status in the context of middle-class American life. They will win elections when the Republicans foul up or get lazy, but the slow climb back to power by the GOP in the absence of one mighty, aberrant event like the stock market crash or the Great Depression seems to illustrate that the Republicans represent "core American values" more authentically (if not more eloquently) than do the Democrats.

MARK RICHARD
Columbus, Ohio

SELL-OUTS

JOHN B. JUDIS'S OVERLY CHEERFUL midterm-election report disproved his argument that the country is becoming "indigo" ("Mood Indigo," September 25). How can the Democrats' "perfect candidate" for Ohio governor be a National Rifle Association (NRA) supporter? How do Democratic candidates who are "moderate, or even conservative, on social issues" demonstrate anything other than the strength of the religious right, even if they win?

LISA PETTIBONE
Ann Arbor, Michigan

JOHN B. JUDIS RESPONDS:
U.S. political parties are not like old-style European parties with platforms that every candidate must adhere to. They are heterogeneous affairs, and what marks a majority party is the degree to which it can tolerate heterogeneity within its ranks while retaining its overall commitment to certain central principles of economics and foreign policy. In many states outside the northeast and far west, the Democrats are going to have to field candidates who, while adhering to the party's views on taxes, the minimum wage, civil rights, and the war in Iraq, nonetheless support the NRA and want to impose restrictions on abortion. If not, Democrats can forget about states like West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, and Missouri. This isn't a concession to the religious right, which, after all, is an organized faction tied to the Republican Party. It reflects the fact that many people in the United States who have a variety of views on economics and foreign policy still oppose abortion and restrictions on gun ownership. It also doesn't weaken the cause of abortion rights, which will fare better under a Democratic majority—even if the Democratic majority includes someone like pro-life Democratic Senate candidate Bob Casey of Pennsylvania—than under a Republican majority that is defined by the views of someone like Senator Rick Santorum.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

In "White Lie" (October 16), Nicholas Minucci's crime took place in Howard Beach, New York, not Bensonhurst, New York. We regret the error.

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GOOD NEWS FOR DOCTORS AND PAIN PATIENTS

On August 22, 2006 the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals granted a new trial for a Virginia pain specialist who was recently sentenced to 25 years for mis-prescribing narcotics. The Court ruled that the trial judge erred when he refused to let the jury hear the doctor's basic defense - that he intended to help these people. The 4th Circuit decision means that doctors acting "in good faith" have a right to let the jury hear that evidence.[1]

Two weeks later there was another hopeful sign, this time from the Drug Enforcement Administration. The agency's latest policy statement makes a serious attempt to reassure doctors that they will not be targeted just for prescribing large quantities of opiates.[2]

The agency also reversed course on their prohibition against multiple prescriptions. Once again patients who have difficulty getting to the doctor will be able to obtain their medicine for up to three months.[3]

While the merit of all this may seem obvious to an outsider, it took the combined efforts of dozens of medical experts, attorneys, pain specialists, academics, activists and officials to bring about these improvements.[4] We hope the 30 million Americans who are under-treated for chronic pain will benefit.

Common Sense for Drug Policy
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War Torn

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

IN WASHINGTON TODAY, THERE are two debates about Iraq. The first is loud and fake. It consists of flag-draped speeches in which President Bush says things like "The party of Harry Truman has become the party of cut and run." It looks like a debate about foreign policy, but it's not. It's a debate about national identity—about the kind of country we want to be: a country that retreats and loses or a country that fights and wins. The Democrats stand accused of defeatism; the Republicans demand victory. The question, as a recent *Weekly Standard* cover story put it, is "WILL WE CHOOSE TO WIN IN IRAQ?"

The second debate is quiet and clinical and awful. It starts with these realities: The violence in Iraq is getting worse; the militias are growing stronger; the Americans are growing more hated; and the good guys—the Iraqis who told us their country could be a decent, functioning place—are either dead or back in Dearborn. This other Iraq debate is a choice between last-ditch efforts that will probably fail and simply accepting defeat and mitigating its effects. It's the choice you face when someone teeters on the edge of death—between aggressive measures that might produce a miracle but could also increase the agony, and letting the patient go, in the hopes that, by bowing to the inevitable, you can at least ease the pain.

The day after the midterm elections, the first Iraq debate will probably end and the second one will truly begin. Republican Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John Warner has already said that, unless Iraq's government imposes order in the next two or three months, the United States must consider a "change of course." James Baker, whose Iraq commission will report at about that time, is saying much the same thing. Bush may still try to stay the course, but, if Iraq causes Republicans to lose the House or Senate, Republicans will suddenly become a lot more willing to lose Iraq.

When the real Iraq debate begins, it will feature three basic alternatives. The first—call it "do it right"—is the brainchild of military wonks like Kenneth Pollack and Andrew Krepinevich Jr. It starts with a counterintuitive assumption: that, in Iraq, security drives politics rather than the other way around. While most commentators envision political settlements that would allow Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki to disarm his country's militias, the "do it right" folks say such settlements are a pipedream. Instead, the U.S. military should create facts on the ground that undercut the militia's appeal. In particular, the United States and its Iraqi allies should pursue a classic counterinsurgency campaign: Rather than chasing terrorists, they should simply park themselves in civilian areas and provide the security for which Iraqis yearn. Once the U.S. and Iraqi armies finally protect Iraqis, sectarian militias will lose their raison d'être.

Many people agree that, once upon a time, this would have been a good strategy. But that time may now have passed. For starters, to effectively protect Iraqis the United States would need many more troops. And adding any more would put a brutal strain on an already wheezing U.S. military. Pollack and company believe you can make headway without more U.S. troops, but that requires Iraqi forces to make up some of the gap, and there is no guarantee they can. After all, the more Iraq's communities turn on each other, the less Sunnis will rely on Shia soldiers for protection. And, even as Iraqis grow more hostile to one another, they are also growing more hostile to us. A recent University of Maryland poll shows that more than 60 percent of Iraqis (and an even higher percentage of Arab Iraqis) now support attacks on U.S. troops, which makes counterinsurgency—a strategy dependent on winning hearts and minds—much harder. All of which may explain why Army Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, commander of multinational forces in Iraq, has put in place elements of exactly the strategy the wonks are pushing, and yet violence in Baghdad keeps escalating.

If "do it right" banks on a new military strategy, "hail Mary" puts its faith in a new diplomatic one. The model is Dayton, where Richard Holbrooke sequestered the leaders of Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia at an Air Force base and didn't let them out until they struck the bargain that ended the Bosnian war. In Iraq, such a bargain would center on oil: guaranteeing the Sunnis some share of it so they stop fighting the Shia-dominated government. Once that happened, the theory goes, the Shia wouldn't need militias to protect them, and Iraq's government could gain control. (Senator Joseph Biden's "partition" plan—which actually calls for a weak central government that shares oil—is a variant of the "hail Mary.")

The problem with the Bosnia analogy is that Dayton came after nearly four years of civil war, when the parties were exhausted and a rough balance of power had emerged on the ground. In Iraq, by contrast, the killing is just gathering steam. And, while it seems obvious in Washington that Shia, Sunnis, and Kurds can all do better at the negotiating table than they can on the battlefield, it's not at all clear that most Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish leaders see it that way. Striking Dayton-like deals—never mind enforcing them—requires either a high degree of political trust, which Iraqis clearly lack, or an outside power strong enough to impose a solution, which the United States, tragically, is not.

The "hail Mary" plan may still be worth trying, but, to give it any chance of success, the United States would have to threaten to withdraw our troops if the parties didn't agree. Which brings us to option number three: "Withdraw our troops." After all, if you believe a Dayton-type deal is impossible—that, even if negotiated, it would quickly unravel—why put U.S. troops in the bloody middle? The optimistic case for withdrawal—that once Americans leave Iraq the Sunni insurgency will lose its rationale, thus making a reconciliation possible—has weakened over the last year, as Sunnis have grown more afraid of Shia death squads than American G.I.s. But the pessimistic case has grown stronger: If Iraq is doomed to hell no matter what we do, why send brave young Americans down with it?

It is impossible to know whether that hell is inevitable or whether some change in American strategy might still stave it off. But one thing is clear: For every day that goes by without an honest debate about Iraq, defeat becomes more certain. The good news is that, in a few weeks, that debate will finally begin. And, if we are very, very lucky, it will still matter.

PETER BEINART

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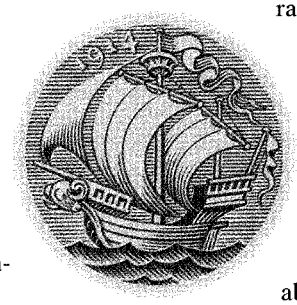
Optimism Gap

"I AM AN optimist," proclaimed Ban Ki-moon, the new secretary-general of the United Nations, in his introductory speech to the General Assembly last Friday. He will certainly fit right in. What has taken place at Turtle Bay over the past six weeks represents nothing so much as the triumph of optimism over sanity. In late August, the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution calling for peacekeepers to deploy to Darfur to stop a genocide that has claimed some 400,000 lives over the last three years. But the resolution contained a cruel catch: an implicit promise that no peacekeepers would enter Darfur without the approval of Sudan's leaders. This was optimistic logic, to say the least, since it is widely known that Sudan's leaders are the very same people who have orchestrated the Darfur genocide; and what *genocidaire* would, given a choice, invite foreign troops to enter his country to bring a halt to his evil work? As a result, it probably should not have surprised anyone when Sudan offered a blunt response to the U.N.'s entreaties: No. Yet the optimists were not done trying, and, six weeks later, they are still at it—urging, begging, cajoling the thugs who rule Sudan to please allow U.N. troops to enter Darfur. Still, the thugs say no. Still, the pleading of the diplomats goes on. This is optimism, of a sort. It is also—excuse our lack of diplomacy—utter madness.

Meanwhile, in the real world, where Darfuris live, things continue to get worse. Consider recent events in an area of southern Darfur called Buram. There, in late August, Arab militiamen from the Habbania tribe attacked 45 villages, killing several hundred civilians. The villages were burned and looted and their residents forced to scatter. "Reportedly, women and children were thrown into burning dwellings as they attempted to flee," according to a recent U.N. report. "Children as young as three years old, including the daughter of an interviewee, were killed in this manner." But that, apparently, was not enough. After the initial round of attacks, militia from another Arab tribe—the Fallata—attacked those fleeing the carnage, causing "the displaced population to scatter even further" and "hampering efforts to deliver aid to those affected." As a result, one eyewitness told the U.N., "Most of our people are hiding in the bushes." Concerning Khartoum's role, the U.N. report left little doubt: "Government knowledge, if not complicity, in the attacks is almost certain."



If this scene—African children being tossed into burning dwellings by Arab militiamen almost certainly backed by the Sudanese government—has a familiar ring, it should. Identical scenes have been unfolding across Darfur for three years. And, for three years, every proposed solution that has received a respectable airing in the international community has involved obtaining the consent of the murderers themselves. No wonder not one of these so-called solutions has worked. The question now before the West, and Americans in particular, is simple: When will we have had enough of this charade? Will we wait until 600,000 die? 800,000? One million? Is there a magic number at which our moral outrage will suddenly trump our deference to Sudanese sovereignty?

Fortunately, elite American opinion may finally be reaching that point. Several weeks ago, Anthony Lake, one of the architects of U.S. inaction in the Balkans, co-authored an op-ed suggesting that NATO would be justified in using force against Sudan in order to get peacekeepers into Darfur. And even *The New York Times* editorial page recently contemplated the possibility that NATO might need to push its way into Sudan without permission from Khartoum.

Which is, of course, the only way this genocide is going to end. The sole alternative to using military force against Sudan is to continue our current approach—counting on the good will of Khartoum's unrepentant killers—and we know how well that has worked thus far. Still, after all these years of murders and rapes and lootings—and after all the roadblocks to peace engineered by Khartoum's ruling regime—some officials, inexplicably, continue to hold out hope that Sudan's leaders will suddenly cooperate in their own undoing. The absurdity of this mentality was never more apparent than in a recent U.N. press release that described the Buram massacres. In response to the deaths, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights came up with a bold proposal: Her office, she announced, "is urging the government of Sudan to order an independent investigation into recent militia attacks." She must be an optimist, too. ■

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An '08 leader balks.

Pop Warner

BY RYAN LIZZA

MARK WARNER AND I had each had a couple of cocktails. They say up in the air one drink feels like two, and so things were, as Warner would later remind me the day he announced he wasn't running for president, "a little foggy." We were aboard a campaign donor's jet, flying back to Virginia after two intense days of New Hampshire politics. Democrats who show up to listen to presidential hopefuls stump in the dead of August two years before the election are a tough crowd. And Warner's pitch, earnest and wonky—"We've fallen to sixteenth in the world in terms of broadband deployment!"—did not always electrify. Yet he seemed to impress the right people. After an event in North Conway with a state representative named Tom Buco, Warner's political aide Mame Reiley shrieked, "Governor, Buco is having multiple orgasms!"

So were the donors. Warner raised almost $10 million, partially by tapping a network of new political money based in the Northern Virginia tech community. He was like a one-man Friendster, adding new buddies to his network everywhere he campaigned. He is the only politician I've seen who carried business cards. Nobody escaped a conversation without a little body contact and a card. (His aides called it "getting the full Warner.") Everyone was a potential friend. "Here, take this," he told a young woman at the Buco event, pressing a card into her hand. She was 17.

In Washington, Warner also had lots of new friends, especially among the class of Democratic operatives thirsty for a winner in 2008. Newcomers seemed truly enamored of him and spoke glowingly of what it was like to work for a politician who hadn't been ruined by years inside the Beltway. "His staff loves him," one recent hire told me, noting the contrast with Al Gore in 2000 and John Kerry in 2004. The press also had a crush, setting Warner up as the electable Hillary slayer and the only fresh face in the Democratic presidential field.

But, no matter how well things seemed to be going for Warner, privately he was filled with self-doubt. He had built a machine that was hurling him forward toward a presidential race that he actually didn't want to enter. "I told him," says his friend and longtime media adviser Jim Margolis, "if you don't want to do this, you have to stop it all now. Because the easy thing is to just say yes. The momentum is only going to get more intense, so this is the time to stop it."

In July, Warner took his family to Spain and Italy, where he hoped to put to rest the nagging reservations about running. His indecision consumed so much of his family's time in Europe that his wife, Lisa Collis, banned the conversation. "There came some times when Lisa said, 'Mark, you know—no more. We're on vacation,'" Warner told me shortly after he returned from Europe. Last week he told me, "I had come back from that vacation assuming this decision would have been put behind me. But it really wasn't."

Most, though not all, of his staff also assumed the decision was already made. "People like you and me don't take seriously when guys like that say they might not run," says Jim Jordan, a Warner adviser. In August, his political team started scheduling him at a presidential pace to get Warner adjusted to the rigors of the coming contest.

Up in the air flying home from his successful but draining trip to New Hampshire, Warner turned around in his seat to chat with me. It was his daughter's birthday, and, instead of being with her, he had been buying garlic bread at a farmer's market in Keene and answering hostile questions from TV reporters about why he refused to denounce the Nevada caucuses as "reprehensible." Even worse, he was now trapped on a seven-seater airplane with a reporter who had been shadowing him for an exhausting 48 hours. I pressed him on whether he was really going to run. His response shocked me at the time. He bent in close, looked me in the eye and asked, "Would *you* want to do this?"

LOOKING BACK, I don't think Warner meant that the indignities of the campaign trail were too much of a bother. He had a cheerful approach to the absurdities of life on the road. He didn't seem to mind when a poodle dressed in a pink bow relieved itself as he courted its owner in New Hampshire. After being trapped in conversation with a September 11 conspiracy theorist at a Hardees in Virginia, he was more philosophical than disdainful, marveling at how many seemingly rational people spin similar tales.

Warner also had a way of making the campaign trail more tolerable by encouraging a jovial, almost carnival-like mood. He kissed babies but also joked about having to kiss babies. When someone suggested he buy his daughter a birthday present at a store called the Hemporium, Warner deadpanned, "I'm pro-organic hemp." In most campaigns, at the end of the day the candidate retires to his suite to read briefing books while the staff and traveling press hit the bars. Not Warner. He personally organized the entire caravan for drinks and dinner.

He invited a rotating band of old friends out on the trail to keep him company. They were all rich and seemed to have names like Rex D. VanMiddlesworth, a guy who tagged along on the trip to New Hampshire. "One thing you'll have to get used to when hanging out with Warner," said a journalist who had spent lots of time with the governor and his traveling party, "is the fact that his fabulously wealthy friends are always trying to pay for things." They served as a life raft for Warner when he was feeling adrift on the road. "They help me keep it real," he told me. "Be-

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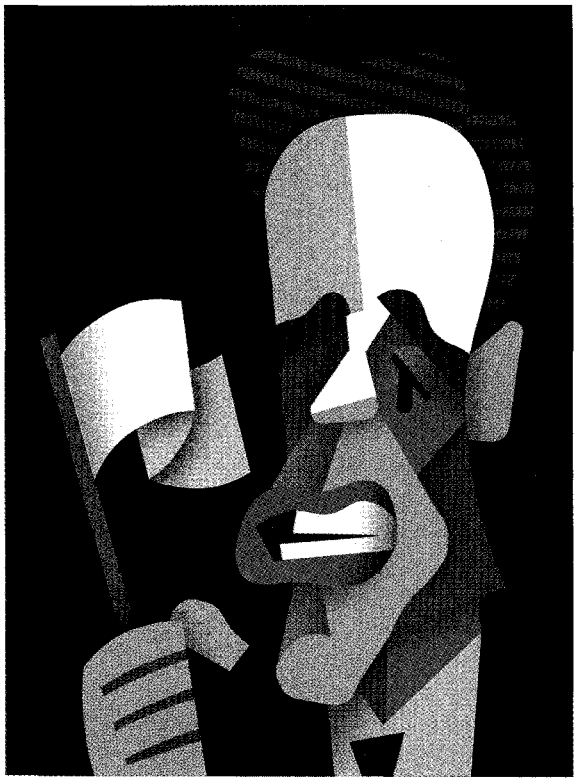
cause most of my friends are not political. Sometimes, at the end of the day, the person you want to have the beer with—[to them] you're not a candidate. You're not anything else. You're just hanging out with a buddy. And you need honest feedback ... if you've got something you don't feel comfortable sharing with a staff person." But, in hindsight, Warner's effort to create a bubble of normality around him was also a sign that he craved a normal life more than he craved being president.



Of course, nobody believed Warner when he said a yearning for a real life was the reason he decided to skip the race. Immediately, the entire presidential-industrial complex, including many of Warner's own staffers, began pinging each other with queries about the "real reason" he was folding one of the sturdiest tents in the '08 field. Was there a skeleton? My own experience with Warner suggests that he was, at the very least, wary of the modern-day vetting process for presidential candidates. When I first interviewed him in a hotel suite in Las Vegas back in June, he turned serious at the end of our chat and made a point of reminding me about the enormous responsibility that a journalist has when writing about a public figure. That same day, he summoned another national reporter to his suite to complain about a profile this person had written months earlier.

One night in New Hampshire, after a few drinks at a pool hall in a college town, the conversation turned to the political troubles of another potential '08 contender. I told a story that had been making the rounds about how this politician once spit on his wife. Warner's huge jaw dropped and his face blanched. The table fell silent. "I guess that's not that funny to you, is it?" I muttered. He shook his head.

After his announcement, I asked Warner if he had been worried about the vetting process. "Not really," he insisted. "You know, politics is a body contact sport. I've run for elective office twice. ... I sat with my family and said, 'If we go through with this, there will be people—who knows what kind of attacks people will make.' But, you know, I think my family and I were ready to take that on."

Margolis says he spent the day Warner dropped out on the phone with reporters explaining that there was no scandal that sidelined Warner. "There was nothing that anyone was concerned about," he told me. "In fact, I sent an e-mail on Thursday afternoon to Mark and others saying I've now told like 20 reporters that there is absolutely no truth that he is gay, that he has a health problem, that he is about to have a sex-change operation, or that the oppo research was really bad."

Another staffer offered the more interesting theory that part of Warner's decision may have been about whether he actually wants to be president at this moment. "Who really wants this job?" the adviser asked. "Do you want to be the one to extricate America out of Iraq, decide whether to strike Iran? It's big-boy time. I believe Mark Warner is up to it, but I wouldn't be surprised if this was one of the ingredients in the soup. This isn't going to be fun." Warner once hinted at this same idea in an interview. We were talking about his foreign policy experience, and I noted that, compared with some other Democrats in the field, he wasn't really that inexperienced. He said that wasn't the important question. "If you do this," he told me, "having the notion that you might be able to do it better than Person X doesn't get you through the night. You've gotta feel it in your *own* gut."

THIS WEEK, WHEN I listened to that same August interview with Warner again, I realized Warner was already hinting at the decision he would make. In between campaign stops in New Hampshire, he brooded over what being president would do to his three daughters, ages 16, 15, and 12. "At some point, being the governor's daughter, that fades," he told me, sounding in hindsight like a guy who had already made up his mind. "You can move out of the state, you can move somewhere else and redefine who you are. If you are ever a child of a president, that's who you are for the rest of your life."

Every governor or senator thinks about running for president. Most do so because they are ambitious and see the presidency as the next rung on America's political ladder. The big question they often ask is strategic. How can I make it through the process and get elected? In the end, that's not the question Warner asked. His advisers swear that the nuances of the primaries and the details of how to topple Hillary Clinton never came up in his final deliberations. Warner asked not whether he *could* be president, but whether he *should* be president. The irony of Warner's answer is that the kind of person who dwells on that question is the kind of person you want to be president. ■

DAVID COWLES

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The Menendez mystery.

Jersey Barrier

BY THOMAS B. EDSALL

PICKING BOB MENENDEZ was a gamble—that much is clear. When Jon Corzine left the Senate to take over as governor of New Jersey last year, he named Menendez, a longtime Democratic congressman from Hudson County in the northeastern part of the state, to serve out the remainder of his term. It didn't take long for that decision to look like a significant miscalculation. Running at a time when the national political landscape favored Democrats, Menendez, improbably, seemed headed for defeat. An air of scandal surrounded his campaign, thanks to revelations that, for almost a decade, he rented space to a Head Start provider while also helping the organization get federal grants. It hardly helped that Menendez was widely seen as a machine politician from a corrupt, urban county—in a largely suburban state where voters have left cities in droves over the past few generations. By late August, with the incumbent trailing his Republican challenger by five points, a columnist for the state's largest newspaper, *The Star-Ledger*, warned that Menendez was "one scandal away from becoming the next Bob Torricelli"—the scandal-plagued senator who was forced to drop out of the 2002 race a little over a month before election day. Four weeks later, on September 28, just such a scandal surfaced with the release of a tape recording of Menendez aide Donald Scarinci pressuring a government-contracted psychiatrist to hire a Menendez friend. Since that moment, Menendez's poll numbers have gone in one direction.

But not the direction anyone might have expected. Today, Menendez leads by three points and appears to have a plausible shot at retaining his seat. What happened? How did a candidate as imperfect as Menendez manage to right his sinking campaign? The answer has something to do with the flaws of his opponent, Thomas Kean Jr., and plenty to do with the unpopularity of President Bush. More than anything else, however, it has to do with just how solidly Democratic this state has become.

IF ANY RACE was going to resurrect the Republican consensus that not so long ago dominated New Jersey politics, it should have been this one. For decades, the corruption and urban decay of Newark and Jersey City in the north and Camden in the south helped drive the descendants of Irish, Italian, and German immigrants to the middle-class towns that dot this state's overwhelmingly suburban landscape. As part of their journey, many left behind their Democratic loyalties and began voting Republican. Bitterly anti-tax and adamantly determined to fence off their new communities from city violence, these suburbanites had turned New Jersey into a GOP bastion by the early '80s. Ronald Reagan beat Jimmy Carter here by a devastating 52 to 39 margin, then crushed Walter Mondale by more than 20 points. And, in 1988, the year of Willie Horton, New Jersey voters favored George H.W. Bush by a margin of 56 to 43.

But, in 1992, New Jersey flipped; and, in every presidential election since, the state's electoral votes have gone to the Democratic candidate. Bill Clinton beat Bob Dole by nearly 18 points; Al Gore wiped the floor with George W. Bush, 56 to 40; and John Kerry defeated Bush by 7 points. The state was part of a nationwide realignment that saw middle-class and upscale northern professionals rebel against a Republican Party they believed had grown too Southern, too moralistic, and too socially conservative. This shift has changed the politics of many once-Republican areas—Long Island, the Chicago suburbs, much of the West Coast, and the Eastern Seaboard from Northern Virginia to Massachusetts.

By selecting Menendez to succeed him in the Senate, Corzine turned this year's race into a high-risk test of just how solid his state's new political consensus really is. That's because, while Menendez appeals to New Jersey's upscale liberals—he strongly opposes the Iraq war, favors abortion rights, and backs stem-cell research—he also seemed more likely than any statewide candidate in recent memory to retrigger the conservative anxieties that overtook voters here during the '80s. Menendez was the most powerful figure—the "boss," his critics would say—in the Democratic Party of Hudson County, an urban area emblematic of the state's tradition of corrupt machine politics and a place from which New Jersey voters have fled in recent decades. In addition, race had been a factor in the Republican ascendance of the '80s; and, with Menendez running against the son of popular former governor Thomas Kean, Rutgers political scientist Cliff Zukin suggested that the election could boil down to "the fact that it's a Kean, which is an iconic name in the state, versus Menendez, which is a Hispanic name." In short, Menendez—nonwhite, dogged by allegations of impropriety, and known to have associates, past and present, in jail—brought with him all the political liabilities of Hudson County.

Attempting to resurrect these old political dynamics has constituted virtually the entire strategy of the Kean campaign. Here, for example, is the partial text of one GOP radio ad. Note the number of times the phrase "Hudson County" is used:

> My name is Larry Giancola, and I'm a lifelong resident of Hudson County. I'm a registered Democrat. I would not want to see Bob Menendez representing New Jersey in the Senate. I think that if he does for the state of New Jersey what he's done for Hudson County, I think we're in trouble—Hudson County being the most corrupt county probably in the whole

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> country. ... There's a bunch of political bosses. There's been sweetheart deals with developers and contractors. A number of them have been indicted, and probably more will be. I think if you want to see the kind of job Bob Menendez does, come to Hudson County. He's made Hudson County a terrible place to live.

Another ad repeats, four times in 60 seconds, the phrase "Bob Menendez, under federal criminal investigation."

Given the state's recent history, you can see why Kean thought this strategy might work. And it still could, if voters like Michael DelViscovo are any indication. DelViscovo was one of 15 people I spoke with on Columbus Day in Watchung—the sort of town to which white voters have moved over the years from places like Newark and Hudson County. The director of human resources at Port Elizabeth, he left Newark for the suburbs—"You can't even live in Newark anymore," he explained—and used to work in Jersey City, the seat of Hudson County. "The politicians are corrupt and they don't care about the city itself, and the city continues to decline," he said of Jersey City politics. "To me, the number-one thing is schools," he continued. "Look at all the crime that is being committed in schools. Fortunately, it's not been in our backyards, but it's eventually going to get there." DelViscovo said he would be voting for Kean. No surprise there.

IF MORE VOTERS were thinking like DelViscovo, the Republicans' strategy of trying to reconstitute their old statewide majority would be an enormous success. But several factors have frustrated their plans. The first is Kean himself. He lacks his father's charisma and speaks in quick, choppy sentences that stick precisely to a script. Menendez, by contrast, is more articulate and thinks better on his feet.

Second, Menendez has been able to muddy the waters of corruption by capitalizing on a series of stories about Kean in the New Jersey and New York press. Last spring, *The Wall Street Journal* revealed that, on the same day the board of UnitedHealth Group Inc. met to discuss controversial stock options granted to top executives, many of those same executives attended a Kean fund-raiser. And one of the company's directors, who was evaluating the propriety of the stock options, was none other than Kean's father. Then, on September 15, *The Star-Ledger* reported that, as a state senator, Kean voted to preserve a $40 million tax break for Horizon BlueCross BlueShield—on the same day his campaign received $13,300 from 17 company executives and family members. Most recently, the paper disclosed that Kean's campaign has accepted $213,025 from officials of companies doing business with the state, despite sponsoring legislation that would prohibit such contributions. These revelations have created the impression that both sides in the race are equally tainted—exactly what Menendez wants. "All these politicians—it seems like they are in there for the money," said one voter, a Republican and retired AT&T executive whom I interviewed in Watchung. "We read all these articles in the paper about them getting money from this guy, that company." Asked about Kean, he said that, while he admires his father, "I don't think the son is following in the same footsteps. There are too many bad things coming out. I might vote for Kean if worse came to worst. Menendez has these problems in the paper, but Kean is no angel."

Menendez's bid to muddy the waters has been helped by the fact that the charges against *him* never quite became full-blown scandals. Take, for instance, the recently released tapes, which feature Menendez adviser Donald Scarinci asking a government-contracted psychiatrist to rehire Vincente Ruiz, a Menendez friend whom the doctor had fired a year earlier. "If you can deal with [Ruiz] and make him happy, Menendez will consider that a favor; if you can't, then that's OK ... you can't," Scarinci says on the tape. That's pretty vanilla stuff: Anyone who thinks that taking care of friends and associates does not happen everywhere—at every level of government as well as in the corporate and nonprofit worlds—is simply naïve.

But maybe the biggest factor keeping Menendez afloat is that New Jersey is no longer the place it once was. Kean's father campaigned and governed as a liberal northeastern Republican; but, in today's partisan environment, with control of the Senate hanging in the balance, it has become much harder for Republicans to appeal to socially liberal voters. And, since 1992, those voters have only solidified their preeminence in New Jersey politics. Democrats can thank the state's economy for that. During the '80s, even as Republicans were enjoying momentary dominance in the Garden State, its workforce was changing in a way that would favor Democrats over the long term. New Jersey's economy was at one time dominated by huge manufacturing companies like RCA Victor, once based in Camden. But globalization and intensified domestic competition had decimated most of these operations by 1980, turning New Jersey cities into slums. Around the same time, high-paying telecommunications, finance, and pharmaceutical companies moved into the state or expanded existing operations—importing scientists, engineers, and MBAs. And so, just as the Democratic Party was beginning to make great strides among the nation's professionals, New Jersey acquired more than its share of them. In 1970, per capita income in the state was 18 percent above the national average; by 2000, it was 28 percent higher than in the country at large.

Affluent and socially liberal, New Jersey has become arguably one of the most difficult places for Republicans to claim major victories. "Do you have to be pro-choice to win statewide in New Jersey?" asks David Rebovich of the Rider University Institute for New Jersey Politics, before answering his own question: "Yes." It's no coincidence that a current Menendez ad mentions the words "*Roe* v. *Wade*." That's a savvy strategy, but don't give Menendez too much credit. If he manages to squeak out a victory, it won't say nearly as much about him as it says about his state. ■

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War on Ramadan.
Fast Times

BY ZVIKA KRIEGER

SITTING AMONG MADONNA'S tassel-tipped corset, a jumpsuit worn by a member of ZZ Top, and other framed memorabilia, Egyptian families wait at their empty tables in silence. A 50-inch flat-screen television overhead plays music videos of the Killers and Nine Inch Nails, while waiters weave aimlessly around the booths. As the sun dips below the Nile, a Red Hot Chili Peppers video is unceremoniously interrupted—the guitar solo replaced by a solemn, baritone voice. "In the name of Allah, the most merciful," it begins in Arabic. Selected verses from the Koran are recited over stark images of pilgrims in Mecca. Within minutes, the Red Hot Chili Peppers return, and the diners head toward the buffet, which, rather than serving the Hard Rock Cafe's normal fare of burgers and fries, is stocked with grilled meats, stuffed grape leaves, and rice pudding—traditional dishes for the *iftar*, or post-fast meal.

Like Rio during Carnival, Cairo is arguably the wildest city in which to celebrate Ramadan—the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and the holiest, according to Muslim tradition. While the month of daytime fasting is traditionally meant to inspire intensive worship and rededication to the teachings of Islam, these spiritual elements are often eclipsed by the nighttime festivities that occur from *iftar* until the pre-dawn meal of *sohour*. In Cairo, the cafés and public squares remain packed with Egyptians smoking water pipes and reveling with friends until the early hours of the morning, giving Ramadan a party-all-night, sleep-all-day attitude more befitting the Sunset Strip than the Hussein Mosque. Increasingly, the monthlong holiday also has a commercial component. While "Western" establishments like the Hard Rock Cafe have always offered exoticized Ramadan menus for bright-eyed tourists, now wing-tipped Egyptians are eschewing their dining room tables for these elaborate productions. Everyone from McDonald's to Lipton Tea is wishing their customers a *Ramadan Kareem* through seasonal promotions, and a recent *iftar* at the Cairo Grand Hyatt doubled as a launch party for the new Mercedes Benz.

But not everyone is happy with what some have called the "Christmasization" of Ramadan. Revivalist Islamists, whose religious movement has been gaining strength in Egypt, have expressed concern that the holiday has lost its religious purity. In a recent interview with Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram*, Egyptian Sheik Ali Gomaa condemned the "confusion of priorities" of those who participate in the festivities of Ramadan but shirk the religious aspects of the month: "Wrong is all around us. There are those who adopt the attitude but fail to be righteous."

For the fundamentalists, what has happened to Ramadan is symbolic of the threat posed to Islam by secular and Western culture. "We as Muslims should resist the imported media that we receive through the satellite dishes and that diverts Muslim attention from fulfilling their religious obligations during the month of Ramadan," wrote conservative Islamist and Al Azhar University Professor Mohye Eddin Abdel Halimin last week, in the newspaper *Al Sharq Al Qataria*. The latest target of Islamist scorn are *maidat al rahman* (charity tables) sponsored by entertainers during Ramadan. Some religious leaders have gone as far as issuing fatwas prohibiting the poor from eating at them. "Money earned by dubious means, including entertainment, is *haram* [forbidden], and the poor should not be eating from these mercy tables," said Souad Saleh, one of Egypt's most dynamic preachers.

In their attempts to expunge these elements of popular culture from the celebration of Ramadan, Egyptian Islamists are hoping to restore the Muslim holiday to the sacred religious festival they claim it once was. But, by emphasizing religion to the exclusion of culture, the Islamists may in fact be endangering the role played by Ramadan in Egypt for centuries.

THERE'S NO QUESTION that Ramadan has become more commercialized in recent years. The *Fawazir Ramadan*—televised riddle programs that air after the *iftar* and whose viewing has been a popular family tradition for decades—are now overridden by the promotion of multinational corporate interests through incessant advertising and extravagant prizes. Homemade *fawanees* lanterns, traditionally carried through the dark alleys of Cairo by gleeful children during Ramadan, are now mass-produced imports from China.

But, other than Islamists, few Egyptians seem to think that the holiday has been corrupted. In Gamaliyah, a lower-class Cairo neighborhood, I expected to find people yearning for the "good old days." But, rather than bemoan the licentious Ramadan TV shows or excessive feasting, Sami Bannam, a middle-aged man in traditional dress sitting in a café after *iftar*, said, "People aren't having as much fun as they used to." When I asked a family who had just broken their fast at a local mosque whether they considered themselves religious, all I got were confused faces. Finally, one of them responded, "What does that have to do with Ramadan?"

This is the biggest flaw in the Islamist conception of Ramadan as a purely religious holiday. Rather, Ramadan is a relic from a bygone era in Egyptian history when religion *was* culture—the two intertwined in a way that made them virtually indistinguishable. As far back as the nineteenth century, British Arabist and Cairo denizen Edward Lane de-

Zvika Krieger is a writer based in Cairo.

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scribed the late-night festivities of Ramadan in his *Manners and Customs of Modern Egyptians*. "Many Egyptians, in the evenings, visit coffee shops," he wrote, "either for the sake of society, or to listen to reciters of romances, or musicians, who entertain the company at the coffee shops every night of the month." This festive, almost secular formulation of Ramadan continued into the twentieth century. "We grew up with it even back in the Nasser days. We were always celebrating during Ramadan; there was always this sense of banqueting," says Egyptian sociologist Mona Abaza. So it is not Ramadan that is changing—Ramadan is functioning as a synthesis of religion and culture like it has for centuries. What's changing is everything else.

This synthesis is being threatened as Muslim countries in general (and Egypt in particular) begin to confront modernity—much as the West did generations ago. The response of revivalist Islamists is to extricate all signs of culture from religious observance in an attempt to restore an imagined past of religious purity. Ramadan remains one of the last holdouts against this strategy. "It is one of the few intact things left from the Old Islam, with its seamless mixture of high religion, customs, culture, and just plain weirdness," says American University in Cairo historian Mark Sedgwick.

This conception of Ramadan also helps to explain why Shia-Sunni divisions, which are taking center-stage in places like Iraq and Lebanon, are strikingly absent from the celebration of Ramadan in Egypt. Though Egyptians are almost entirely Sunni, many of the traditions that have come to define Ramadan for them—the lanterns, the chanting, the ceremonies—are particularly Shia in character, dating back to the time when the Fatamids reigned. But, when I asked Egyptians how they felt about practicing Shia customs, I was generally met with blank stares or shrugs. "People don't even know about the Shia remnants, because the celebration of Ramadan has become such an integral part of the national culture," Abaza explains.

To most Egyptians, there is nothing strange about breaking your fast while listening to Bon Jovi. Though the face of popular culture has certainly changed over the past centuries, its role in Ramadan has remained remarkably constant. It is the Islamists who are threatening the holiday's traditional character. "We never used to see the *zebiba* [an overt sign of continuous prayer] during Ramadan, and middle-class women, though religious, were not predominantly veiled," complained Galal Amin, a prominent Egyptian intellectual, in *Al Ahram*.

But, as Islamists gain increasing support in Egypt, Ramadan will continue to be a primary battleground for their war against Western culture. The extent to which Ramadan can maintain its symbiotic character—combining both *zebiba* and ZZ Top—will be a litmus test for how the Muslim world grapples with modernity. "The forces of globalization and consumer culture do not have to undermine religion," Abaza says. "Religion just has to adapt." ■

NIH secrets.
Study Break

BY JEANNE LENZER

It's not news that the pharmaceutical industry routinely suppresses negative data, with the effect of exaggerating the benefits of its drugs and glossing over their risks. Take, for example, the painkiller Vioxx. According to court testimony, the drug's manufacturer, Merck, withheld data showing that the drug caused five times as many heart attacks as a similar painkiller, naproxyn. The result? Food and Drug Administration (FDA) safety expert David Graham calculated that Vioxx caused an estimated 39,000 to 60,000 heart-attack deaths before it was pulled from the market in 2004. Or take the example of the anti-depressants known as SSRIs, which include Prozac and Paxil. Recent analyses of several papers touting the benefits of the drugs for children found that the authors had accentuated the positive and downplayed the negative. It was only when the FDA analyzed *all* the data, in a 2004 study that was initially suppressed, that it was discovered that taking the drugs doubled the risk of suicide for young people.

Thank goodness these secretive, corporate drug trials are counterbalanced by taxpayer-funded studies at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), whose results are open to public scrutiny, right?

Actually, wrong. You would think that, because taxpayers paid for the studies, the data ought to be available for independent verification. But that's not how it actually works. When several leading researchers contacted me, frustrated because they couldn't obtain data from NIH-funded studies, I filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for the data they were unable to obtain. My FOIA requests were denied. Indeed, despite a 1999 law clearly stating that such information should be available to the public, it appears that no data have *ever* been released under the law. And the price for that secrecy may be paid in American lives.

The use of steroids to treat spinal-cord injuries offers a sobering example. In late March 1990, the NIH announced, with great fanfare, the results of the Second National Acute Spinal Cord Injury Study (NASCIS 2), a 487-person trial that appeared to show that high-dose steroids reduced paralysis caused by acute spinal cord injury. Underscoring the urgency of its results, the NIH issued an unprecedented prepublication press release. This was followed by a "Dear Doctor" letter,

Jeanne Lenzer is a freelance medical investigative journalist and a Knight Science Journalism Fellow at MIT.

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which was faxed to emergency departments across the nation, instructing physicians in the correct dosing of steroids for patients with such injuries. Given what was at stake, the NIH's actions appeared to be warranted. Each year, approximately 10,000 people, most of them young and healthy, suffer spinal-cord injuries in car accidents, falls, or shootings. If, as NASCIS 2 suggested, steroids helped prevent paralysis in these cases, it heralded a significant advance in treating people who might otherwise spend their lives on breathing machines and in wheelchairs. The "Dear Doctor" letter ensured that emergency-room physicians would make high-dose steroids the standard of care for victims of spinal-cord injuries.

But not all doctors were as enthusiastic about high-dose steroids as the NIH. Fred H. Geisler, a neurosurgeon with the Illinois Neuro-Spine Institute, had seen not only patients treated with steroids who failed to improve, but also patients who got worse and died—not from their injuries, but from the side effects of the steroids, such as overwhelming infections and gastrointestinal bleeding. Geisler was surprised by the NIH claims, but he knew enough to wait for the published paper so that he could go over the data himself. When the report was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, six weeks after the NIH announcement, it did nothing to allay his doubts. Instead of reporting on all the subjects included in the study, as is customary, the authors wrote up the outcomes on only a subset of patients.

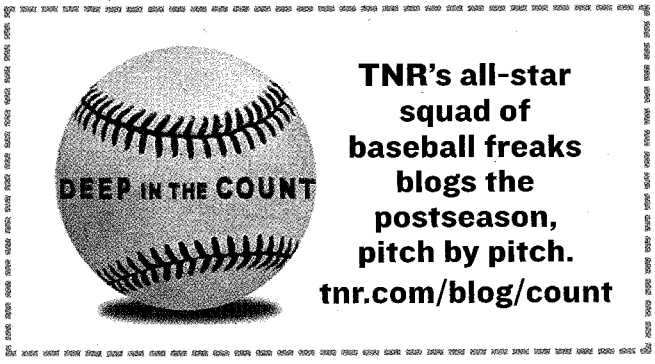
Geisler knew the only way he could confirm his suspicions, or lay them to rest, would be to reanalyze the raw data from the study. But the lead author of NASCIS 2, Michael Bracken of the Yale School of Public Health, refused to release the study data to Geisler and to other critics despite multiple requests. After being contacted by some of these critics in 2003, I filed a formal FOIA request with the NIH for the data. The NIH directed me to Bracken and Yale, saying they did not possess the data. I then requested the data from Bracken and, separately, from Yale. Both denied my requests.

Lacking access to the data underlying the NASCIS 2 claims, most doctors feel obligated to prescribe steroids as the "standard of care." But it's a standard of which many are skeptical. On May 5, 2004, for instance, more than 1,000 neurosurgeons gathered at the annual meeting of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons in Orlando, Florida, to hear a debate between Bracken and Geisler on high-dose steroids. An electronic poll of the audience showed that, prior to the debate, only 21 percent of the neurosurgeons present believed that steroids lead to a significant improvement in outcome (compared with 48 percent who said it didn't improve outcome and 31 percent who responded "don't know"). After the debate, those who said steroids improved outcome dropped from 21 percent to 11 percent, and a mere 6 percent said it ought to be the standard of care. Nonetheless, when asked if they would personally prescribe high-dose steroids for patients with acute spinal cord injuries in the future, 60 of the surgeons present said they would. When asked why, 11 percent said they believed it improved outcome, 31 percent claimed they feared litigation, and 38 percent said there was no better alternative.

The concerns of skeptics like Geisler were recently amplified when the results of another study, known as the CRASH trial, were announced. The study compared patients with serious brain injuries who were treated with steroids with those treated with a placebo. For every 100 patients treated with steroids, three *more* patients died than did patients treated with the placebo. From these results, Geisler estimates that 5,000 people with spinal-cord injuries have already died from treatment with high-dose steroids—and that stopping steroid treatment could save 300 lives per year in the United States.

Nor is Geisler alone in his concerns. Karim Brohi, a British trauma surgeon at the Royal London Hospital, concurs: "Patients around the world are suffering due to the inappropriate reporting and application of this data," he says. "I believe it is highly questionable that Bracken should be refusing to release the original data given the potential associated morbidity and mortality associated with high-dose steroids." Perhaps the most surprising support for Geisler's views comes from an unexpected source: William Collins, a now-retired Yale neurosurgeon who was Bracken's co-principal investigator on NASCIS 2. Collins says he broke with Bracken and withdrew his name from the third trial in the series in protest because "[Bracken] was always trying to find something that I couldn't find"—i.e., a clinical benefit from steroid treatment.

Nor is this a unique case of taxpayer-funded research being kept hidden. In 2004, an NIH-sponsored study was reported to show that Prozac was effective in treating depressed teenagers. But the NIH and the study authors have refused to release the data in response to FOIA requests—requests, significantly, that were made while Congress and the FDA were holding hearings on the safety of antidepressants. In another NIH study, published in 2003, researchers reported that the brains of children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) were smaller than those of children who had not been diagnosed with the disorder. Critics questioned whether the problem



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might actually be caused by the drugs used to *treat* ADHD. But, when a researcher asked for the underlying data, his request was denied.

THIS ISN'T HOW it was supposed to be. The Shelby Amendment, passed in 1999, specifically directs federal agencies to "ensure that all data" from federally funded research are "made available to the public through the Freedom of Information Act." The NIH, in its data-sharing guide known as Circular A-110, asserts that data-sharing "is essential ... to improve human health."

Although the NIH officially encourages data-sharing, adherence to the policy is voluntary. It is ultimately left to the individual researcher or research institution to decide whether or not to share their data. As Norka Ruiz-Bravo, NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research, acknowledged, "Some people share their toys better than others." But the explanation for why so much NIH data are kept under wraps may be more serious than that. Data secrecy is becoming the norm rather than the exception, in an era when researchers—even those who have public funding—are increasingly likely to have commercial interests to protect.

According to a 2003 survey of 171 universities that received NIH grants by the then–General Accounting Office, 91 percent held equity options in the very companies for which they were developing technologies. Some academic institutions receive over $10 million in royalties per year for technologies they have developed. And individual researchers—including some who have refused to release their data in response—have also received funding from sponsoring drug companies. These commercial ties, and the secrecy they spawn, have real consequences for physicians who must rely on research results that may not be entirely disinterested.

It is difficult to know how many dangerous treatments might remain on the market, unchallenged, because of data secrecy. In the case of Prozac for teens, the data withheld by researchers *could* show that Prozac is not safe for children—an important development, given that it is currently the only anti-depressant approved by the FDA for the treatment of children. In the case of the study showing that the brains of children with ADHD are smaller, it means that stimulant drugs continue to be prescribed even though it is not clear whether brain shrinkage in children with ADHD is caused by the disease—or by the drugs used to treat the disease.

Wondering how widespread the problem of NIH secrecy was, I reviewed the data-sharing exemptions in Circular A-110 and all extramural grants awarded by the NIH in 2005. What I found was that, despite the lofty claims of data-sharing, there are so many exemptions in the guide and the Shelby Amendment that they actually serve to codify data secrecy. For example, only researchers conducting studies that cost more than $500,000 in direct costs annually are required to file a data-sharing plan. Data are also exempt if they are not cited as part of a federal policy or regulation that has the "force and effect of law"—an exclusion that single-handedly eliminates virtually all NIH data. After reviewing all of the grants awarded by the NIH during 2005 and finding that virtually none of the data would fall under the conditions of mandatory release, I asked the NIH to identify *any* studies that had been released under the Shelby Amendment. Their answer was surprisingly frank: I was told that, "despite numerous requests" for data since the Shelby Amendment was passed in 1999, "none met the criteria of the regulation." ■

Hastert as fiction.

Page Turner

BY NOAM SCHEIBER

IT'S THE AFTERNOON of December 19, 1998, the day the House will impeach Bill Clinton, and one Republican representative can't bring himself to vote. Not, as you might expect, because he's torn between his partisan passions and constitutional principle—the representative has just delivered a screed pronouncing the president's offenses impeachable. But because he literally can't vote. He has emptied his wallet, ransacked his office, and badgered his aides, all to no avail: Our poor hero has misplaced his electronic voting card.

Welcome to the misadventures of Charles Lattan, a fictional representative from Idaho's fictional seventeenth district who launches a quixotic presidential bid. Lattan is the protagonist of *Potomac Beach*, a Christopher Buckley–esque satire penned by a congressional aide–turned–p.r. specialist named Eron Shosteck. When Shosteck released the book last year, it won an exceedingly modest reception—a handful of reviews in insider publications like *Roll Call* and *National Journal*'s *The Hotline*—and raised few eyebrows on Capitol Hill. The bumbling, slow-witted Lattan was just too cartoonish to resemble any actual congressmen.

But, now that House Speaker Dennis Hastert has bungled his way through the Mark Foley scandal, Shosteck's novel looks less and less like an exercise in burlesque. The author, it turns out, spent three years working as Hastert's press secretary in the early '90s, and more than one former Hill aide now sees shades of Shosteck's old boss in the novel. "Watching the current events on the Hill has reminded [friends and former colleagues] of my book," says Shosteck, who estimates some two dozen *Potomac Beach* fans have contacted him since the scandal broke.

Shosteck is understandably coy when discussing his muse. "Some of the scenes are based on actual events," he says.

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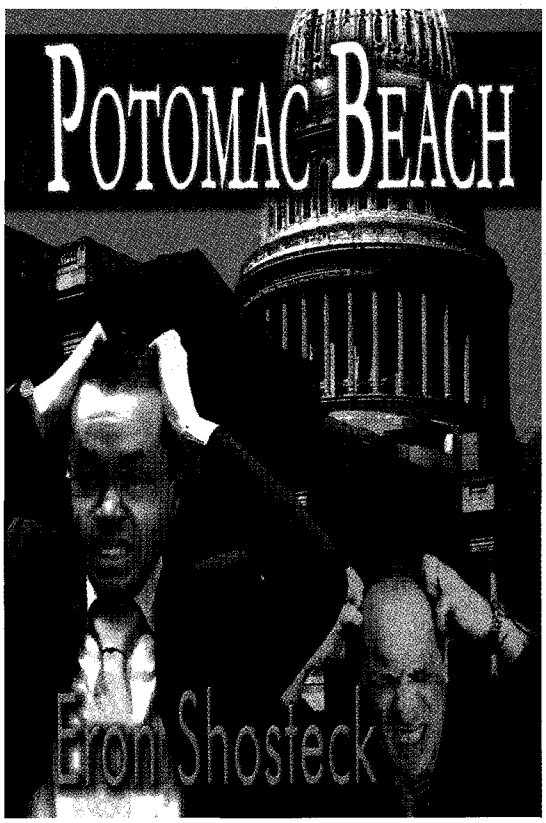
"Others are completely products of my imagination. It's up to the reader to decide which is which." Given what we know of Hastert's performance during the Foley scandal, that shouldn't be too challenging. These days, it's hard to read up on Shosteck's protagonist without inferring a thing or two about the man who runs the House.

Potomac Beach opens during the final months of the 1998 campaign season, and Lattan, a former plumber and House freshman, is up for reelection. His chances, to put it mildly, are not good. Lattan ties himself in knots during an interview with Larry King—he of the world-famous softball question. Later on, his aides exclude him from all but two minutes of his own 30-minute infomercial, the better to minimize his incoherent ramblings. A list of Lattan's mental states reads like the symptoms of head trauma: During those rare moments when his head isn't "spinning," it's usually because his brain is "boiling" or his mind is "aflame." Or because he's asleep. Lattan has a narcoleptic's gift for nodding off at mildly stressful moments.



Lattan only manages to impersonate a minimally functional candidate thanks to the vigilance of his staff. Without them, he lapses into Admiral Stockdale–like confusion. During a campaign appearance at an Idaho middle school, Lattan gets a question about abolishing the Department of Education. Panic sets in when he can't remember his own position. "[T]he person who would know, the chief of staff, was God knows where on Capitol Hill," Shosteck writes.

On Election Day, Lattan looks headed for certain defeat. His opponent is his stylistic opposite: surefooted, charismatic, blessed with Kennedy-esque good looks. But fate, in the form of a natural disaster, intervenes. Torrential rains keep the undecideds home, and Lattan squeaks by with less than a point to spare.

Throughout the book, no subject more reliably raises the fictional representative's blood pressure than the former president. A headline proclaiming Clinton's apology to the nation for the Lewinsky affair sends Lattan into a sputtering rage: "Clinton didn't apologize one bit! That slick bastard did it again!" Lattan is driven to distraction when a reporter asks him about his botched impeachment vote. "Here I am, an honest man, and I have to explain myself while that impeached, lying pervert continues to wage his illegal war in the Balkans," he privately fumes.

At times, Lattan can't even denounce Clinton without muffing his lines. Before a phone interview with a reporter during the Lewinsky scandal, Lattan's press secretary painstakingly reviews the requisite talking points. But, once the questioning begins, Lattan clams up, forcing the aide to scrawl responses in huge letters on a legal pad.

Tragically blind to his own limitations, Lattan decides to run for president not long after winning reelection. The raison d'être for his bid isn't lowering taxes or even protecting potato subsidies back home in Idaho, but his intense Clinton-hatred—hence the campaign mantra, "*His* interns lick envelopes." Lattan's flesh-pressing style is some parts George Allen, some parts Larry David. On a trip to New Hampshire, he refers to Canadians as "Canucks," which he assumes to be a term of endearment. He slurps down Elijah's wine at a Passover seder with prospective supporters and proposes abolishing Social Security before an assemblage of retirees. Lattan isn't even competent enough to get himself entrapped. Porn king Larry Flynt hires a prostitute to seduce him in Iowa. But, unlike his nemesis in the White House, Lattan falls asleep before he can incriminate himself.

Thanks to scenes like these, one friend told Shosteck she thought she was watching the movie version of *Potomac Beach* at the height of FoleyGate. A bumbling Republican congressman? Hastert did an almost Oscar-worthy rendition of the tongue-tied Lattan during his recent Foley-themed sessions with reporters. An inveterate Clinton-hater? In an attempt to divert attention from the scandal, Hastert took after various unnamed Clinton aides during a recent interview. As Shosteck explains it to me: "He felt that Clinton was getting away with things he would never be able to get away with because he didn't have Clinton's panache or finesse with the media. ... He's someone who wasn't refined or discerning enough to be able to hobnob with the Washington elite. That drove a lot of his anger."

But, wait, who exactly does Shosteck mean by "he"? Hastert or Lattan? Shosteck declines to clarify. "The novelist is powerless against what he might read in the newspaper the next day," he says. "It's harder and harder to distinguish fact and fiction." ■

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The GOP runs amok.

Daddy Dearest

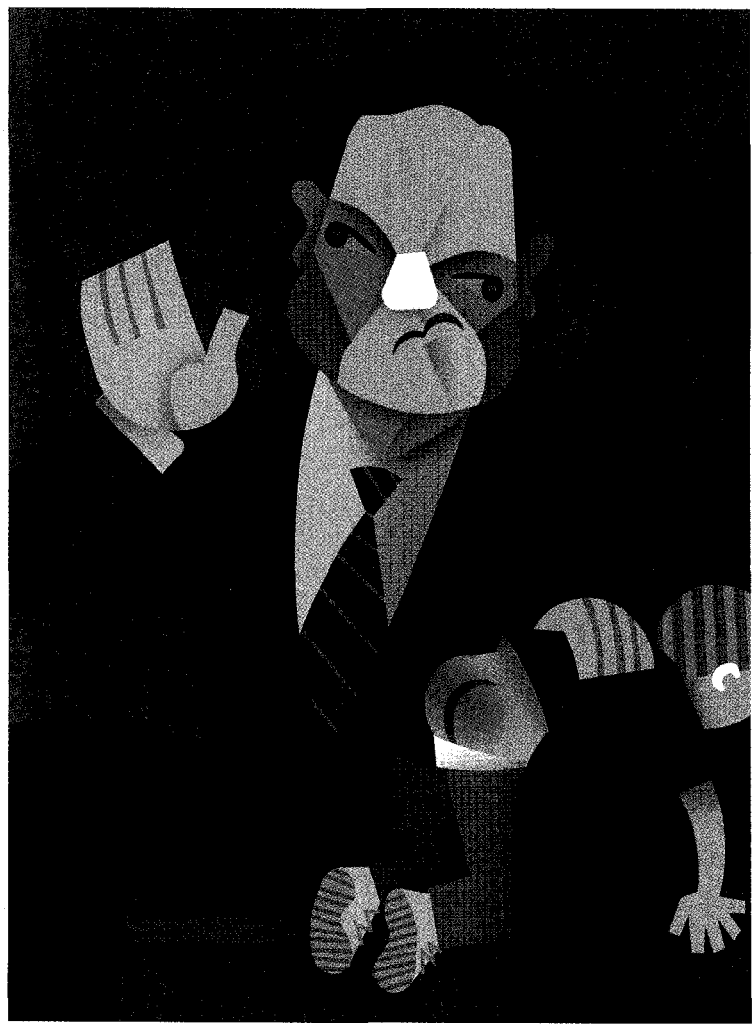
BY MICHELLE COTTLE

MOST PARENTS FEEL a twinge of anxiety at the thought of leaving their teenagers unsupervised for any length of time. It's not that the kids are *bad*; it's just that, set free from parental oversight, the urge to run wild can prove irresistible. The 1983 Tom Cruise hit *Risky Business* provided a worst-case template for how quickly things can spiral out of control: One minute, your super-responsible son is lip-synching Bob Seger tunes in his underpants. The next, he has wrecked your Porsche, turned your home into a brothel, and gotten all your furniture stolen by Guido the Killer Pimp.

For House Republicans, the breakdown in discipline that followed scandal-plagued Tom "The Hammer" DeLay's resignation as majority leader last year was like *Risky Business* for the Beltway set—the legislative equivalent of the caucus stripping down to its skivvies and bebopping through the halls of the Rayburn House Office Building. (Caution: Do not attempt to visualize.) Absent DeLay's heavy hand, moderates began thwarting the leadership on issues like drilling in Alaska and Medicaid. Members of the Appropriations Committee dragged their feet on Speaker Dennis Hastert's ethics reform measure, prompting weeks of negotiations, a suspension of debate, and a series of eleventh-hour closed-door meetings. Even so, while there was the requisite grumbling about the new regime's struggle to find its footing, many in the majority seemed happy to exchange a measure of effectiveness for greater independence—especially once the collegial John Boehner was elected majority leader in February. As Representative Tom Feeney told *National Journal* over the summer, "It's a refreshing change for members to sit down with the leadership."

Then came word of the Mark Foley communiqués, and suddenly the keg party was over. The House GOP quickly erupted in a vicious storm of back-biting, finger-pointing, and ass-covering. It was the sort of humiliating public display that makes Democrats snicker and drives already anxious Republicans to weep. More than that, it vividly illuminated the downside of a caucus set free from years of tough-love supervision by one of the fiercest—and most effective—disciplinarians of modern politics. As Hastert stumbled and his deputies took turns knifing him in the back, House Republicans received a brutal lesson in what can happen when the Daddy party loses its Daddy.

A SCANDAL BASED on allegations that the House leadership suppressed warnings that a closeted member was preying on underaged House pages would have caused headaches for the GOP no matter who was in charge. But not even the most partisan Democratic strategist could have anticipated how completely the current leadership would come unglued. Hastert's crisis-management efforts consisted largely of denying all knowledge of everything and blathering on about how this was a Democratic conspiracy orchestrated by George Soros, the liberal media, and, of course, Bill Clinton. Republican members and staffers spent their days issuing conflicting—even self-conflicting—statements about when the speaker was first told about Foley's page-stalking hobby. (Three years ago? Last spring? Tuesday? On second thought, maybe it was only his staff that was ever briefed on this.) Members of the leadership, meanwhile, took turns savaging their wounded captain with an eye toward self-preservation (National Republican Congressional Commit-



DAVID COWLES

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tee Chairman Tom Reynolds), self-aggrandizement (Majority Whip Roy Blunt), or both (Boehner).

With the troops running wild and mutiny in the air, it's little wonder that nervous souls began pining for their lost Hammer. "The infighting that Republicans say is going on now, they are absolutely convinced, would not be going on if Tom DeLay was still there," reported "Hardball" correspondent David Shuster on October 5. Say what you will about the ethically challenged Texan, but he ran a tight ship. And, as much as he must hate seeing violence done to his dreams of a permanent Republican majority—a dream that ultimately cost him his seat—DeLay surely cannot help but feel a measure of vindication over the chaos that gripped the House exactly one year after a Texas grand-jury indictment forced him from the leadership.

With his inexorable blend of threats, favors, punishments, and bribes, DeLay made a formidable patriarch, keeping his caucus unified and remarkably under control—no mean feat in the rambunctious House. Admittedly, this often required aggressive, extended arm-twisting: for example, the time when the leadership kept a vote on the 2003 Medicare drug bill open for almost three hours past its limit—during which period DeLay himself allegedly promised a colleague that he would back his son's congressional candidacy in exchange for his vote. From time to time, insufficiently family-oriented Republicans had to be taught a lesson by being stripped of their committee chairmanships, such as when the Veterans Affairs Committee chairman got uppity in 2004 and called for more funding for the Veterans Affairs Department. Not even DeLay's real family was allowed to get in the way of the congressional clan he assembled: When his brother Randy's lobbying career created headaches for him, the Hammer not only banned him from his congressional offices but stopped speaking to him entirely. As Randy recalled to *The Washington Post Magazine* in 2001, "Tom said, 'I can't afford you as a brother right now.'" It was all part of transforming the GOP House into what one political scientist recently dubbed "a lean, mean partisan legislative machine."

By contrast, DeLay's successors have neither the skill nor the will to serve as family patriarch. Hastert's fans and detractors alike portray him as a genial, low-key, hands-off manager who comfortably played the good cop to DeLay's handcuff-them-and-beat-them-half-to-death-with-a-truncheon cop. Though the speaker's admirers have been insisting for years that his power to persuade is greatly underestimated, without DeLay he lacks the threat of force to back up whatever negotiating savvy he may bring to the table. As one GOP lobbyist recently told *The Washington Post*, "Everybody in the caucus loves Denny. The problem is that nobody really fears him."

Boehner is hardly better suited to assume the roll of strongman. Like Hastert, he rose to the leadership in large part thanks to his non-DeLayness—in this case, vis-a-vis the presumed favorite in the race, Roy Blunt. A close DeLay ally who had built a K Street fund-raising network second only to the Hammer's, Blunt was ultimately seen as too close to his mentor. And so the prize went to Boehner, an affable guy who actually boasts of not twisting arms on votes and who characterized his open management style to *National Journal* this way: "I try to have a vision of where we are going, to have everyone on the team participate in the development of the vision, the mission, the strategy. ... It's more inclusive. There is more listening." Yeah, that'll keep 'em in line.

WHEN Democratic aide–turned–political pundit Chris Matthews coined the term "Daddy party" in these pages in 1991, he was referring to the GOP's ideological focus on red-meat issues like law, order, national security, and moral accountability. But he might well have been referring to the party's basic structure. Whether in the way they choose their presidential candidates or run their congressional caucuses, Republicans have a longstanding reputation for being more hierarchical and respectful of authority than their messily collegial Democratic counterparts. That tendency only became more pronounced after the 1994 GOP takeover, which undercut committee chairmen and centralized more power than ever in the hands of top congressional leadership. Moreover, the revolutionaries of 1994—and basically every election since—came to town loudly trumpeting their lack of political experience. Under the light touch of the post-DeLay leadership, with no one to tell them how to behave, these unruly amateurs have been left to step all over one another's toes and generally muck up the legislative process.

After the Foley meltdown, it took the emergence of a stern step-daddy to restore order in the GOP caucus. On October 5, Vice President Dick Cheney offered a full-body embrace of Hastert in the *Washington Examiner*, and—presto!—there came a swift end to damaging comments from the speaker's lieutenants and devastating polls by Fox News tallying the seats that would be lost unless Hastert resigned. President Bush himself made a joint appearance with Hastert, and the matter was settled: The speaker would stay—at least until after the election.

Of course, the full extent of Hastert's injuries—along with those of his entire caucus—will remain unknown until voters have their say next month. But, already, the Foley Follies have reminded us that the GOP's famed unity and discipline of recent years didn't flow from some innate wellspring of collective self-restraint so much as it was maintained by a handful of determined autocrats. Without them, Republicans are just as likely to go all self-destructively *Lord of the Flies* as, well, Democrats. Low-key leaders like Hastert and Boehner may be well-liked—even well-respected—by their colleagues. But being popular only gets you so far in Congress. As the Hammer well knows, sometimes it is more important for Daddy to be feared than loved.

That is, unless you want to come home one day to find the Porsche wrecked and the house full of hookers. ■

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HACKS 2006

Where Are They Now?

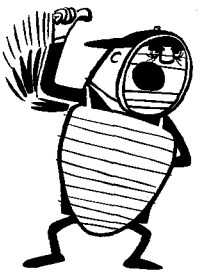
LAST SEPTEMBER, HURRICANE KATRINA REVEALED [illegible]ush administration studded through and through [illegible]h hacks. These cronies exhibited the quality made [illegible]mous by [illegible]he Federal Emergency Management [illegible]gency's ([illegible]) Michael Brown: a loyalty to party and president that could overcome the kinds of issues that would give lesser governments pause, such as insufficient experience or a sketchy diploma. A month after the storm, THE NEW REPUBLIC drew up its list of the 15 biggest Bush hacks, introducing to the public the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) chief financial officer who had no background in finance and the Small Business Administration (SBA) head who ran out of money for loans.

A year has passed since we first met these titans of the hackocracy. Over the course of this short period, the TNR hacks have faced many challenges, from revelations of a mysterious illness to catastrophic computer trouble. But, even through adversity, they held true to the hack creed that had brought them so far already—try, come up short, make a phone call to an old college buddy, and try again. You learned their names, you loved their failings, you watched their flameouts. Where are they now? TNR follows up with some of its 15 original Bush hacks.

#14 ANDREW MANER

Chief Financial Officer, DHS

Last year, Andrew Maner was running DHS's $40 billion budget, despite his dearth of management experience. In March, Maner left his post to spend more time with his family after the personal sacrifice of government service got to be too much. (He later revealed to the *Federal Times* that he had sometimes thought about work during off time.) The trying times at DHS might have discouraged a lesser man from applying to further jobs for which he was underqualified. But Maner, undeterred, continues to aim high, as when he ran for a seat on the eleven-member board of Capitol City Little League this spring: "While I don't know what qualifications are required or desired for the board, but [*sic*] I believe I possess several that could help: 1) A passion for the game of baseball, I myself play Ponce de Leon baseball for adults, and it remains a highlight of the week. 2) As the former Chief Financial Officer for the Department of Homeland Security, I possess numerous quantitative and qualitative skills that could assist the league. 3) We have 3 boys, 6, 3 and 1 that have started to go through the league and will be in it for several years." Maner lost, as the parents judged him to lack relevant experience, despite his love of the game.



#11 PATRICK RHODE

Acting Deputy Director, FEMA

When we last checked in with Patrick Rhode—the TV anchor who became FEMA's acting deputy director after a stint with President Bush's 2000 campaign squad—he was calling the federal government's response to Hurricane Katrina "probably one of the most efficient and effective responses in the country's history." Critics scoffed at Rhode's characterization, but we now know, thanks to some e-mails unearthed by the press this year, that Rhode had things under control. At 6:21 a.m. the day Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, FEMA head Michael Brown had told his deputy that he was preparing for an interview. "Yea, sitting in the chair, putting mousse in my hair," Brown wrote. "Me too!" Rhode replied. Coordinated response? Check! Sadly, FEMA lost Rhode and his formidable experience with hair product in January, when he returned to private life. A FEMA spokesperson declined to say why he had departed.

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#6 HECTOR BARRETO

Administrator, SBA

A year ago, Hector Barreto was struggling to process Katrina-related small-business loans. A month after the hurricane hit, his agency had approved just 76 of the 12,000 applications filed. Today, the SBA's future looks bright—largely because Barreto

has found employment elsewhere. But he does deserve an A for effort: At the height of the loan backlog, an SBA press release announced that "employees are working 12 to 14 hours seven days a week"—which is, unfortunately, illegal. But even the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory's labor standards weren't enough to get the loans off the ground. By March, the agency had approved $6 billion in loans—but had distributed only $450 million. Thankfully, this dismal number might not be accurate, since Barreto has a reputation for misrepresenting SBA figures. A 2003 General Accounting Office investigation found that he had inflated small-business statistics by billions of dollars. (Nine additional federal investigations completed a portrait of Barreto's SBA as an orgy of fraud, waste, and rampant mismanagement.) It's no surprise that a 2005 study of morale at 30 federal agencies ranked the SBA dead last. It's also no surprise that, this April, Barreto resigned in disgrace. He now heads up The Latino Coalition, which has been described as a "small and obscure Hispanic lobbying group."

#4 JIM NICHOLSON

Secretary for Veterans Affairs

After drastically underestimating the number of

veterans who would need medical care in 2005, former Republican National Committee Chairman Jim Nicholson tackled 2006 with gusto. With the veteran population aging rapidly, Nicholson had the dubious honor of presiding over what he called the biggest graveyard expansion "since the Civil War." Then there were the Wiccans. This May, Nicholson's agency found itself entangled in controversy over its decision to forbid a Nevada widow from placing a Wiccan pentacle on her slain husband's memorial plaque. Veterans Affairs (VA), which recognizes 38 other emblems of faith—including the "Humanist Emblem of Spirit"—now faces litigation from numerous Wiccan families. And then, this spring, a VA analyst's laptop—which

FREE NATHAN HECHT!

WE'VE LONG KNOWN that what's lawful in Texas is not synonymous with what is right. But, this fall, the Lone Star State outdoes itself: In Fort Worth, Texas Supreme Court Justice Nathan Hecht is being persecuted for answering the call to defend a hack in need. While Harriet Miers stood for the Supreme Court nomination last fall, Hecht—the judge who occasionally dated Miers and finally called things off at a Denny's—gave at least 120 interviews on her behalf, including, at the request of Karl Rove, a call to James Dobson assuring him that she was pro-life based on their experiences together in a born-again church. As thanks for his service, in May, the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct slapped Hecht with a reprimand for violating judicial conduct and abusing his position of power. Hecht appealed the punishment in a two-day hearing in August.

Hecht is an award-winning, Yale-educated champion of justice; an amateur philosopher; and an organ player. There is no better demonstration of his awesome prowess in the courtroom than his August appellate hearing: While the Commission made do with a San Antonio lawyer who was paid $1 for his work, Hecht retained Chip Babcock, a moderately famous First Amendment attorney who himself retained several associates to haul boxes of evidence in and out of the courtroom. Babcock emphasized Hecht's role as an American free speech hero, arguing about his defense of Miers, "That's what we do in this country. We have battles over ideas, and we don't muzzle the most important speakers." Hecht's hearing also revealed new evidence that confirms his innocence: Texas Appellate Judge Elizabeth Lang-Miers, Harriet Miers's sister-in-law, *also* defended the nominee while she was under scrutiny, affirming character attributes of great importance to the American people, including that Miers makes a delicious sweet potato pie. Lang-Miers was not punished for her actions. In a moment that proved his fairness and incorruptibility, Hecht averred on the stand that Harriet's pie is not actually very good.

The verdict in Hecht's appeal will be released on October 23 in an unprecedented courtroom hearing in Fort Worth. Hecht's fight for his appeal has won the support of thousands around the country, including the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas, Senator Arlen Specter, and state District Judge James Parsons III of Palestine, Texas. Check www.free-nathanhecht.com to learn what you can do to help!

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contained the personal information of 26.5 million veterans—was stolen. But we can't fault Nicholson for the ensuing mess, since no one in his office bothered to tell him about it until two weeks after it happened. Some might ask why Nicholson didn't do more to improve the department's "F" rating for computer security, which it received in four out of the last five years. But at least one fan doesn't mind: As Press Secretary Tony Snow put it, Bush still has "full faith and confidence" in the VA chief.

#2 JOHN PENNINGTON

Director, Region Ten, FEMA

Like his FEMA colleague Patrick Rhode, Pennington has shown notable skill at taking a circumstance that makes him look weaselly and insisting that he actually handled it like a star. In the wake of Katrina, a Washington State Republican operative revealed that Pennington had suffered during his days in the state House from an obscure disease called ankylosing spondylitis. This unfortunate illness kept him from standing or sitting for more than a half hour and had mysteriously struck when the House was up for important votes in which Pennington would have been a tiebreaker—and when he wanted to take a European vacation. Pennington bravely penned a press release comparing himself to Franklin D. Roosevelt to justify the vacation.

This summer, Pennington left his position as a regional FEMA director for a new job that posed similar challenges, but on the micro level: Washington State's Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management director. He received this massive demotion through cronyism, too: He was appointed by an old friend from the state legislature, now a Snohomish County executive.

#1 HARRIET MIERS

White House Counsel

When preparing our guide to the Bush hackocracy last year, we struggled to decide which of the hacks should take the number-one spot. Many we profiled were deserving. But then, suddenly, Bush nominated former Texas Lottery Commission Chair Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court, and our work was done. Miers's croniness quotient was so high—and the post to which she was nominated so important—that Republicans and Democrats alike called her unqualified; the senators tasked with reading her Judiciary Committee questionnaire judged it "inadequate" and "insulting"; and so on. Faced with such ridicule, a lesser hack might resign from government in a huff. But certain strengths of spirit particular to the Bush administration allowed her to emerge unscathed from her ordeal: an ability to forge ahead after experiencing criticism and a capacity to believe that, while things may have looked bad, they were actually *good*. When Miers withdrew her nomination on October 27, she went back to work as White House counsel that very afternoon. Three days later, she helped prepare the nomination of her more experienced successor, Samuel Alito, to the Court, generously advising him to skip the eyeliner that had lost her key support. And, in April, she told *Time* that much of the nomination process was actually "very enriching and very enjoyable"—like receiving letters from childhood friends who'd noticed she'd become famous.

These were compiled by Conor Clarke, Eve Fairbanks, Bradford Plumer, and Elspeth Reeve.

HACK NEWSFLASH!

It's hard out there for a hack.

Seems like just yesterday that, if you had the right college roommate or shared the right cab, you were guaranteed a Cabinet-level position or, at the very least, a spot on the Supreme Court. No longer. The tyranny of merit reached new heights in late September, when, in a blatant attack on überhack and former FEMA head Michael Brown, Congress passed a Homeland Security bill limiting the president's future FEMA choices to only those individuals with a "demonstrated ability in and knowledge of emergency management."

Fortunately, Bush—himself no slouch in the hack department—has come to the defense of FEMA's hacks. Earlier this month, Bush signed the Homeland Security bill but, in a brilliant stroke of misdirection, immediately issued a signing statement asserting his right to ignore the appointment provision; it would, he claimed, impede his ability to nominate the person "best qualified by experience and knowledge to fill the office." Thanks to the president, no longer will someone be held back just because he or she doesn't know the difference between a tropical storm and a hurricane.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Themes and Schemes

OF COURSE MARTIN SCORSESE has varied interests—remember *The Age of Innocence* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*—but it seems fair to say that his chief subject is crime. He was reared in Manhattan's Little Italy, where, he has said, "There were two kinds of people who commanded respect, apart from parents. There were the minigodfathers, who controlled the neighborhood, and the priests." His films have dealt less with the priests. Conditioned by what he saw and heard back then, Scorsese has long been looking at crime from the inside out. Now he enlarges perspective. In his new film, **THE DEPARTED**, he looks at criminal doings from the viewpoints of both criminals and police.

THE DEPARTED
(Warner Bros.)

BLACK GOLD
(California Newsreel)

The chance to do this came from a Hong Kong film called *Infernal Affairs*, the plot of which was built on a double deceit. A crime boss puts a youngster in the police academy so that the new policeman can eventually be of use to him, and a police-academy graduate is assigned to undercover work in a criminal gang. *The Departed*, derived from the Hong Kong film, is set in Boston and focuses on a detective squad in the Massachusetts State Police, possibly because Scorsese wanted to rummage among Irish-American Catholics for a change.

The symmetrical plot device may make the story sound overly neat. If only it were. William Monahan's screenplay is so full of cryptic pronouncements and swift portentous scenes that neatness is blown away. Scorsese was apparently concerned with the idea of identity, one of the ancient themes of drama, and how it affects one's actions, emotions, self-knowledge, even dreams. But his film is so frantic with plot jabs and counterjabs that the gravity of the theme is blurred in cop-and-criminal sorties. Even Scorsese's usually gleaming direction is dulled to the *Law & Order* level, except for a few of his famous traveling shots.

Some subplots wind through. Both young men get involved with a police-department shrink. She is an attractive young woman, presumably because that was the only way Scorsese and the producers could get a woman into the cast. Further mechanics: there is a scene in which the crime boss and his gang sell stolen military stuff to Chinese agents, a scene that must be No. 2,150 in the roster of heavily armed shady business deals. (The ace was the weapons deal in *The Wild Bunch*.)

As the criminals' stooge and the undercover cop, Matt Damon and Leonardo DiCaprio labor along like honest workmen doing their jobs—no flaws, no flourishes. Mark Wahlberg barks continuously as the staff sergeant of the detective squad. Martin Sheen is thoughtful as the squad captain, the only character in the picture whose language is not soaked in raunch. (Perhaps Sheen and others thought that such diction would be out of place for a former president of the United States, even a fictional one.) Vera Farmiga, as the shrink, is pleasant.

The overarching menace of the piece is Jack Nicholson, who virtually repeats his Joker in *Batman*. What a masterly performance that was: an outsize balletic rendition of a mythic figure, far past the imaginative reach of any other current American film actor. And how wrong that style is in this realistic picture. The crime boss whom Nicholson plays simply cannot stop acting. He cannot leave any gesture, any phrase, unadorned. It is hard to see how this slightly ridiculous performer could have held power for so long. Surely some aspirant would have seen his foolishness as a possible danger and scuttled him.

At the finish, the film's title looks a bit comic. Hardly anyone we have met in the picture has *not* departed. Killing is so common that we can only wonder how any of these characters survived long enough to finish their story.

Is Scorsese desperate? This screenplay has the scent of it, as if he is scraping for material to feed his basic filmic interests. But the risk in this case—not evaded—was that his need led him close to painful strain. I can't remember another Scorsese moment as shockingly banal as the finishing touch here. We look out the window of the stooge's luxe apartment, past his terrace. Then a rat comes out and plays on the terrace railing. Well, heaven knows Scorsese's past work and passion for film, so he will probably be forgiven for that rat.

Injustice is a recurrent topic for documentaries. When the injustice is political or legal, we become impatient: we want action of some kind that could improve the matter. But when the injustice is economic, as it very often is, the news is merely depressing. What can be done? What international oil company is going to reduce its profits to give the people at the bottom a fair share?

Now there is coffee. **BLACK GOLD**, an engrossing documentary by Marc Francis and Nick Francis, deals with its growing and marketing. The facts may make us feel a twinge with our first morning sip. The film starts in and returns to Ethiopia, where coffee was first grown centuries ago and which is the fourth-largest producer of coffee in the world. Our guide in this expedition is Tadesse Meskela, an Ethiopian fluent in English (and other languages). He has been engaged as an ambassador for a group of seventy-four coffee farmers' co-ops in Ethiopia who have organized to get a livable income from their share of the two billion cups of coffee that are drunk daily around the world.

At a meeting of farmers in southern Ethiopia, Meskela tells them that coffee sells in the United States for $2.50 a cup, while each of them is getting small

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change every day for fourteen hours of labor. We see the houses—huts—where the farmers live with their families, and hear their wish that they had the money to build a school and hire a teacher so that their children might have better lives. Then we see the New York commodities traders, the international coffee exchanges, a meeting of the World Trade Organization in Mexico, all of whose operations seem designed to make the dealings at the top glide more smoothly. Meskela is at all these places, working agreeably and hard, pushing his products, which are in themselves admired. But the greatest share of Ethiopian coffee is purchased by such giants as Starbucks and Nestlé through deals and sources of their own, not through the co-ops.

And there the situation is, presumably to remain. Like so many disturbing documentaries, *Black Gold* will be seen, clucked over, then stored in the back of the mind. A few centuries ago, in *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope wrote of "Coffee, which makes the politician wise / And see through all things with his half-shut eyes." Well, if we like, we can hope that this film about coffee will make the politician even wiser, with open eyes. ■

JED PERL ON ART

The Varieties of Artistic Experience

I.

WHEN MEYER SCHAPIRO died ten years ago, at the age of ninety-one, he had a place in American intellectual life that was extraordinarily large and also rather mysterious. Quite a few of the people who mentioned his name with a quickening excitement, a catch in their voices, had probably not read a single one of the exacting essays about medieval art on which his scholarly reputation rested. His fame had everything to do with the multi-facetedness of his intellectual exploits, with the reach of his imagination. He had moved from medieval art to modern art and back again, and shifted easily from broad theoretical overviews to close-up observations. I think that people who were acquainted with a few of his works—perhaps the essays on Cézanne and Van Gogh written for lavishly illustrated monographs, or the brief commentaries on ancient Israeli mosaics and a medieval Haggadah—were drawn to his free-spiritedness and his restlessness, to an excitement about the range of human possibilities that was natural in a person who had immigrated to the United States with his family in 1907, when he was three, and come of age amid the hurly-burly of New York. Schapiro was a figure of seigneurial cosmopolitanism who felt absolutely rooted in his time and place, a man with a serene self-assurance who was insatiably curious about other people and times and places.

THE LANGUAGE OF FORMS: LECTURES ON INSULAR MANUSCRIPT ART
By Meyer Schapiro
(Pierpont Morgan Library)

ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE
By Meyer Schapiro
(University of Chicago Press)

This is a story that Saul Bellow might have told. Schapiro was a product of the public schools—he had gone to P.S. 84 in Brooklyn—and grew up with the intellectual self-confidence to dissect the errors in such master-thinkers as Freud and Heidegger. He had devoted his life to beauty while writing for the *Marxist Quarterly* and the *New Masses* and helping to found the liberal-socialist journal *Dissent*. And his brilliant academic career never prevented him from finding the time to visit artists' studios. He had even, so it was said, helped de Kooning decide when his first *Woman* was complete. When Léger was in the United States during World War II, Schapiro took him to the Morgan Library to see a Spanish Romanesque illuminated manuscript, which, with its bold planes of color and daringly geometricized figures, had a deep impact on the Frenchman's work. No wonder many people came to recognize in this tough-minded idealist an exemplary New Yorker—the best kind of intellectual that the city, and maybe even the country, had produced.

The art critic John Russell has recalled how "in January 1993, during the last weeks of the Museum of Modern Art's great Matisse exhibition, it was suddenly whispered one day among the huge attendance that Meyer Schapiro was there." And his presence, the presence of this earthy and august intellectual, "seemed to be as memorable as anything in the show." The fascination that Schapiro exerted was in some broad sense the fascination of a teacher. Although he was associated with Columbia University for more than half a century, he came to be most widely known through the lectures on modern art that he gave at the New School in the mid-century years, lectures attended by an audience that was seeking not degrees but simply knowledge.

These lectures were the perfect medium for Schapiro's flexible, wide-ranging mind, because in his hands the lecture became a form of improvisation, an imaginative adventure, a play of possibilities. There may have been about Schapiro's lecture style—about his combination of specificity and broad-mindedness, and his eagerness to familiarize a large, somewhat heterogeneous audience with the news of modern art—an afterglow of the democratic optimism that had made the lecture such a central factor in the upsurge in cultural education in the nineteenth century. His lectures were experiments in a lofty popularization, an effort to help a relatively broad audience grasp the real issues in modern art. While Schapiro was never a theatrical virtuoso of the lecture hall in the manner of Dickens or Wilde, his modesty and wit and scholarship had their own kind of theatrical power, and one still hears people speak with awe of certain evenings when Schapiro was unstoppable, when his easy erudition left his audience rapt, at moments even aghast.

Schapiro's admirers were acutely aware that the power of the lecture hall was ephemeral, and although he had been publishing a wide range of essays since the 1930s, those to whom his work meant the most quite naturally feared that the breadth of his viewpoint, his

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gift for setting art in the widest context, would not outlive him. These concerns were answered, to some degree, in the later years of his life, when with the goading of those close to him, Schapiro began to put more and more of his writings into book form. Four volumes were published while he was alive: *Romanesque Art* (1977); *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1978); *Late Antique, Early Christian, and Medieval Art* (1979); and *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society* (1994). Since his death, the process has continued, guided by the sure hand of his widow, Lillian Milgram Schapiro, who died only a few weeks ago at the age of 104. There has been another volume of his theoretical writings, a volume devoted to his studies in the semiotics of visual language, a volume of lectures on Picasso, and even a collection of Schapiro's own drawings and paintings. (He was a gifted and practiced draftsman who produced works ranging from beautifully limned portrait studies to small, striking abstract paintings.)

The most exciting addition to the Schapiro canon in the past decade has been the publication of several groups of lectures, on Impressionism and Romanesque art. It was certainly Schapiro's intention, when he accepted various invitations to speak publicly in the 1960s, that the transcripts of these events would form the basis for future books. During his lifetime it was often said with regret that he had not yet managed to write the great synthetic book about medieval or modern art that so many people believed he had in him. And although he never managed to transform these lectures, at least not to his satisfaction, we are very lucky to have them, edited by art historians with a delicate feeling for the exploratory power of Schapiro's thought. The Patten Lectures, given at Indiana University in 1961, were edited by James Thompson and published in 1997 as *Impressionism: Reflections and Perceptions*. In 1968, Schapiro gave a series of lectures at the Morgan Library on early European manuscript painting, focusing on the British Isles in the seventh and eighth centuries, which have been edited by Jane Rosenthal and published as *The Language of Forms: Lectures on Insular Manuscript Art*. And now the Norton Lectures, which Schapiro gave in 1967, have been edited by Linda Seidel and are appearing with the title they had when first presented at Harvard: *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture*.

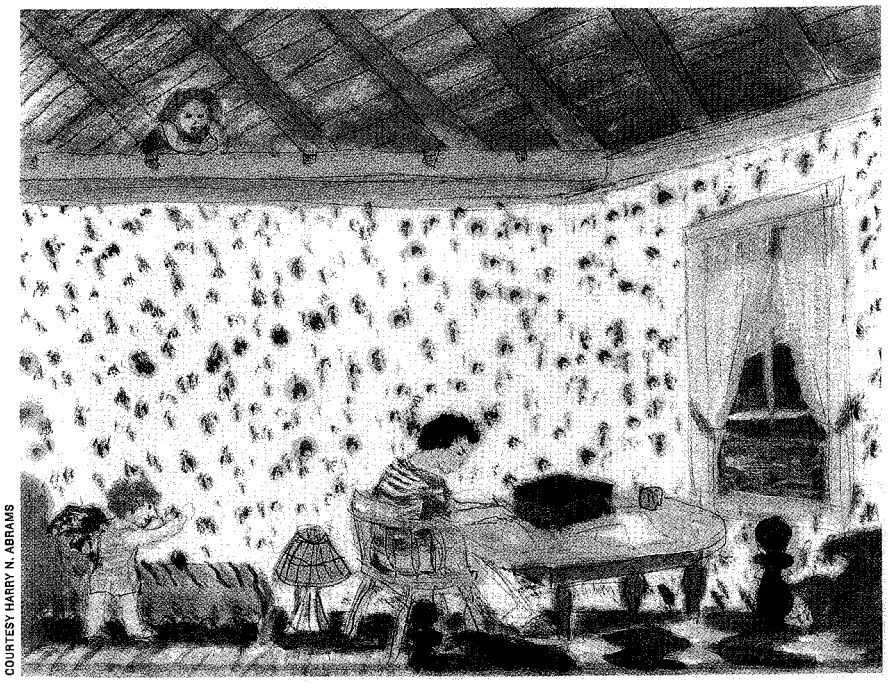
This growing shelf of books by Meyer Schapiro might be expected to generate a growing commentary on his work, and indeed in the last years there have been several conferences or lecture series dedicated to Schapiro's legacy, at Columbia University, at the Louvre, and at the University of Rome. With Schapiro, however, we are now in that curiously ambiguous period that often comes after an influential figure has died, when the immediacy of their impact has waned and the permanent shape of their work remains to be defined. The riches of the recent publications, as extraordinary as they are, may have the paradoxical effect of adding a layer of confusion to our picture of Schapiro. For if one mark of an intellectual is to be found in what he chooses to publish, then what are we to make of the fact that Schapiro did not choose to publish much of what is now in print, at least not in its current form?

There is reason to believe that Schapiro himself did not believe that his work would ever yield a coherent pattern; he certainly published no summing-up volume, no magnum opus. The four volumes published during his lifetime each carried the subtitle "Selected Papers," which strikes me as something more than a conventional academic phrase. Schapiro was announcing, I suspect, that completeness was not only not possible—it was perhaps not even desirable. He may have been suggesting that there were so many important things to be said that what one was finally going to be able to say would be, by its very nature, "selected."

II.

If there was some essential point of pride in Schapiro's variegated achievement, it was that his reach was too wide and too deep to permit a unifying view. The spectacularly close analysis of geometric patterns in the 1968 lectures on Insular manuscript painting ("Insular" refers to the art of England, Ireland, and Scotland) can be said to come out of an entirely different view of the world than the discussion of the erotic undercurrents of still-life painting in the famous essay titled "The Apples of Cézanne," which appeared in the *Art News Annual* in the very same year. Even if there is some unity or thread that can ultimately be found in these wide-ranging studies, it is one that can be discovered only after we have acknowledged how diverse Schapiro's interests were, with their almost crazy-quilt quality of shifting approaches and juxtaposed ideas.

Schapiro's achievement becomes easier to grasp when we consider his art-historical concerns as one strand in the larger story of intellectual and artistic life in New York from the 1930s to the 1960s.



COURTESY HARRY N. ABRAMS

MEYER SCHAPIRO, *Scholar at Work*, 1938

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There has been a good deal of emphasis on the Marxist background of mid-century intellectual life, and the extent to which anti-Stalinism and some of Trotsky's later writings on the freedom of the artist created the atmosphere in which artists and intellectuals in those years came to celebrate the freestanding value of art. Yet the portrait of Schapiro as a liberal-spirited socialist that emerges from such an account, no matter how accurate and attractive it may be, scants the fact that for Schapiro, and for many of his contemporaries, Marxist or socialist ideas were part of a larger intellectual and imaginative adventure. Like so many brilliant young men and women, Schapiro came of age as successive waves of European thought were reaching American shores, and Marx was absorbed along with Hegel and Nietzsche and Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer and Freud and even Spengler, in a bewildering variety of ideas and vantage points, a flood full of riptides and undercurrents. All this emboldened Schapiro and his generation to try to grasp what these thinkers themselves had tried to grasp, which was nothing less than the meaning of the world, of life, of man.

It is difficult today, at a time when the finest thought is often characterized by a penetrating skepticism, to recall how grandly heroic certain ideas, Will and Spirit and Progress, still looked in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Like so many of the writers who came of age in the world of *Partisan Review*—such as Lionel Trilling, Randall Jarrell, Clement Greenberg, Dwight Macdonald, and Saul Bellow—Schapiro learned to think and to feel by immersing himself in the wraparound visions of the great Europeans. Hegel, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, and Spengler wrote profusely, creating in their theoretical and philosophic works imaginative realms that young men and women found themselves inhabiting, much as they inhabited the vast fictional kingdoms of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Dickens, and Balzac.

Schapiro's generation, which grew up in the afterglow of these triumphantly scaled visions, somehow sustained an intellectual optimism, albeit an increasingly tempered one, even as the calamitous developments in Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia made certain passages in Nietzsche and Marx look almost unbearably sinister. While Schapiro's generation became penetrating critics of many forms of intellectual grandeur, eager to point out what was woolly or obscure or fantastical in Hegel and Nietzsche and finally even in Freud, they were at the same time emboldened by these immense intellectual adventures. When Schapiro, late in life, spoke of "style," or "world-view," or "unity," these words suggested ideas that, however carefully he might want to circumscribe them, still had a nineteenth-century grandeur about them, a sense of vast horizons, of extraordinary possibilities.

The atmosphere of mid-century New York, at once intellectually expansive and toughly independent, pushed intellectuals to develop a response to European thought that was sharp and direct—that cut down to size the fiercely expansive European visions. The New Yorkers were too restless and too fast-moving finally to have much patience for the huge volumes that nineteenth-century Europe had produced, although they prided themselves on having read them from beginning to end. When the Americans chose to express the ideas that were closest to their hearts, they favored the short form of the essay or the casual context of the extemporaneous lecture. And the very choice of a literary form became, whether they knew it or not, a philosophical statement. So many of the key books of the mid-century moment are essay collections: Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination*, Greenberg's *Art and Culture*, and Jarrell's *Poetry and the Age* come immediately to mind.

The quality of thought in the essays collected in these books can be very, very large; whole worlds are revealed in the lightning bolt of a sentence. But even when the approach is broad, the writers want their grandest statements to have a quickening attack, a speed. There is a directness to the style, a straightforwardness that grows out of a distaste for the ponderousness of European ideas. Anything that smacks of traditional literary style is rejected; even the short, aphoristic forms sometimes favored by the Europeans strike the Americans as overly contrived. For the New Yorkers, it was the essay that signaled an ease, an intimacy, an efficacy, with ideas.

THERE MAY BE NO AMERICAN thinker of the mid-century years who was at once so deeply attracted to the grandeur of European ideas and so skeptical about those enormous visions as Meyer Schapiro. Schapiro had been in Germany in the 1920s and was familiar with the works of Alois Riegl and the Vienna School, those daring art-historical theoreticians who were building on the heritage of Kant and Hegel. In 1953, Schapiro published an essay titled "Style," which for decades stood as a solitary, magisterial celebration of some of the essential theories of the origins of style—but it is a survey that is as critical as it is admiring of Riegl and Wölfflin, and it is characteristic that Schapiro concludes, after briefly discussing Marx, that "a theory of style adequate to the psychological and historical problems has still to be created." When he remarks that such an understanding cannot be developed until there is "a unified theory of the processes of social life," one wonders if he believes that such a unified theory is even possible.

Everywhere in Schapiro's writing there is a reverence for largeness—and a desire to deflate those impossibly bold dreams. Two of his most famous essays, on art-historical studies by Heidegger and Freud, amount to takedowns of key European thinkers. He writes about Heidegger's study of Van Gogh's paintings of shoes, which Heidegger interprets as the shoes of a peasant. Schapiro acknowledges that Heidegger has taken from his encounter with Van Gogh's canvas "a moving set of associations with peasants and the soil," but then hastens to add that these associations "are not sustained by the picture itself"—for, as Schapiro explains, the shoes in fact belonged to the painter.

Schapiro's study of Freud's work on Leonardo, while a devastating critique of Freud's scholarship, is grounded in a deep admiration for the father of psychoanalysis. Schapiro sees "the hand of a master in [Freud's] powerful theory which is expounded there with a beautiful simplicity and vigor" and praises Freud's "noble image of Leonardo's mind and character." Yet this does not stop Schapiro from anatomizing numerous problems in the writing, beginning with the use of an erroneous translation of a passage in Leonardo's notebooks, which leads Freud to a series of reflections on the vulture when in fact Leonardo is talking about a different bird, the kite. This analysis of Freud's errors and blind spots and logical inconsistencies eventually brings Schapiro to some more general observations—on the difficulty of explaining the development of new artistic forms in psychological

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terms, and on the necessity of framing one's understanding of an artist's psychology within the psychological and social conventions of a particular time.

The critical spirit with which Schapiro approached Freud and Heidegger and a number of other European thinkers was grounded in a profound suspicion of what Schapiro himself obviously saw as the allure of such all-embracing visions. If there was some essential attitude that Schapiro shared with the artists who were his friends, among them Barnett Newman and Willem de Kooning, it was precisely this complexly ambivalent view of the monuments of European thought. When de Kooning, speaking on abstract art at the Museum of Modern Art in 1951, said that he had "learned a lot" from the great theoreticians of early modern art but was "completely weary of their ideas now," he was registering a skepticism that animated Schapiro's searching analysis of the modern movement. Newman, a close friend of Schapiro's who had hardly anything good to say about European painting, was an enthusiast of Impressionism, to which Schapiro devoted so much of his energy in the lecture hall. And when Newman registered his impatience with Kant and Hegel and the other great philosophers of art and then went on to articulate his own aesthetic viewpoint, there was a sense that Americans were finally taking themselves as seriously as they in fact did take the Europeans. One finds the same bracing self-confidence in Schapiro's vigorous aesthetic statements, in the essays "On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art," "On the Humanity of Abstract Painting," and "On Perfection, Coherence, and Unity of Form and Content."

III.

If Schapiro's attitudes have some kinship with those of his artist friends, the range of his interests also parallels very closely the subjects covered in the great European avant-garde art periodicals of the 1920s and 1930s, the years when Schapiro was starting out. Early Christian and Romanesque art were featured in these magazines, along with the work of many artists who would be crucial in Schapiro's writing, including Courbet and Seurat and, of course, Picasso. A Byzantine mosaic from San Marco and a thirteenth-century stone head had been among the illustrations juxtaposed with modern works in the *Blaue Reiter Almanac*, edited by Kandinsky and Franz Marc before World War I. The interest of Picasso and Matisse and many other artists in the Romanesque and Byzantine periods was well known, and the manuscript paintings that so interested Schapiro, with their powerfully expressive stylizations, were reproduced in avant-garde magazines, sometimes in conjunction with modern works.

Early twentieth-century artists saw in Romanesque, Byzantine, and medieval art a wonderful freedom. They saw artists who were blissfully ignorant of the fixed standards of representation and classical structure that would dominate European art from the Renaissance through the Baroque. The central thrust of the modern movement was not that art ought to be anti-realist or anti-classical, but rather that realism and classicism, like all other modes and manners, had to be tested against a personal standard of authenticity. This was the attitude that dominated the avant-garde in the first third of the twentieth century, when Schapiro made his early visits to Europe, and you might say that he carried those views with him all his life. It is significant that despite the great range of his interests, Schapiro scarcely ever wrote about the art of the Renaissance or the Baroque, those periods that the avant-garde had been inclined to reject as too thoroughly conventional in their philosophies and their forms.

For the moderns, any work of art that stood outside the standard histories, whether an African mask or a Romanesque tympanum, could suggest a fresh approach to the act of creation. And the work of an artist who remained anonymous—an artist who carried none of the psychological or biographical baggage with which Vasari had weighed down the artists of the Renaissance—could present a paradoxically strong artistic personality, because it was a personality expressed through form alone. It is precisely this search for fresh, unexpected expressions, a search that had elated the early twentieth-century avant-garde, that animates Schapiro's lectures on Romanesque painting and sculpture.

It is sometimes said that Schapiro, by focusing on the elements of surprise, imagination, and playfulness in Romanesque art, was combating an older art-historical attitude that saw in the work of the anonymous Romanesque artisan an impersonal submission to larger imperatives, whether of an architectural or a theological nature. Schapiro himself, in the Norton Lectures, quotes Georges Desvallières, an early twentieth-century critic, as saying that "as our ancestors, the Romanesque workmen, deformed their figures from the need for a certain equilibrium between the architecture and the personages who are to be inserted in it, so Matisse, in drawing, takes account of the rectangle formed by the paper." Schapiro is at pains to reverse this equation, and to argue that for the Romanesque artists formal choices were often narrative or psychological choices—that these artists "deformed" so as to express. And if Schapiro was here contesting a rigidly formal reading of both modern and Romanesque art, it is also true that what Schapiro discerned in early European art was very close to the possibilities that Picasso, Matisse, Miró, and Klee had discerned in these non-naturalistic varieties of representation.

The pleasures of Schapiro's lectures, although they were given in the late-modern 1960s, are what might be called early-modern pleasures: the pleasures of close looking, and of the search for unexpected ways to express the most self-evidently human experiences. Schapiro offers a powerful argument for the expressive power of non-naturalistic form in the opening pages of the lectures on Insular manuscript art. He lingers lovingly, exactingly, on the ways that figures and animals and decorative borders are constructed of repeated or regular geometric forms. He stays with these images, looking very closely, until we begin to see how the apparent regularity and symmetry of the pages breaks into irregularity and asymmetry, unlocking a range of psychological and metaphorical meanings.

Schapiro emphasizes the elements of surprise and unpredictability in these illuminations. He begins with a lion, which here takes the place of the eagle as a symbol for St. John, from the seventh-century Book of Durrow. He points out that from what might be called a basic design standpoint it is surprising that the horizontal form of the lion is set in the overridingly vertical space of the page, leaving large open areas both above and below the lion. Schapiro's analysis is too elaborate for summary treatment, but the essential point is that it is the very unexpectedness of the relationship that gives the page its deeper drama. What ini-

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tially, according to Schapiro, "appears a conflict among the major axes of figure, field, and frame" turns out to be complicated by a series of extraordinarily delicate echoes and concurrences between the ornamental patterning of the lion and the ornamental patterning of the border. The tension between the horizontal lion and the vertical page is at once underscored and resolved through the echoes of the green of the animal in green areas in the border just to the left and right of the animal. These establish an implied horizontal axis that balances the overwhelmingly vertical axis of the page. Thus a composition that at first appears resplendently regular turns out to be stamped with a whole range of particular and even idiosyncratic artistic choices.

The direction of the tiny feet in another image from the Book of Durrow gives the still symmetry of the image a dynamic energy. The figure who symbolizes St. Matthew in the Echternach Gospels, so singular and elemental, is locked into place by an ornamental border that takes on a mysteriously active role, extending as it does into the very center of the page. And on another page in the Echternach Gospels, a rearing lion that has an elegant, curvilinear, almost rococo power is set against the equally elaborate play of sharply angled lines that break free of the border and suggest an asymmetrical cage. These pages are presented by Schapiro as extraordinary demonstrations of artistic freedom, as reflections of a feverishly open-ended creative process.

Schapiro is well aware that in early medieval Europe iconographic decisions would never have been left in the hands of a painter or a sculptor. The arrangement of the figures on a church façade was a matter of theology, to be determined by the Church. But in the lectures on Romanesque architectural sculpture, which focus on the art of central and southern France that Schapiro had first studied in the 1920s, he points time and again to choices of placement and representation that are so emotionally powerful, even sometimes so idiosyncratic, that they cannot but be the result of individual artistic decisions. While the overall arrangements of figures and forms often suggest a fixed hierarchy—with Christ at the center, for example—Schapiro emphasizes that these hierarchies are subject to many daring variations. Of the portal at Vézelay, he writes that "the whole has the appearance of rotating forms rather than forms which are as stable as columns," and he describes how the figure of Christ "breaks through the boundaries of the inner tympanum," and he notes movements that are "eruptive" and forms that force "the architectural lines apart" and are even "anti-architectural." A little later, speaking of the church at Souillac, he describes carved forms that are "like a freehand drawing. It has not been measured." What Schapiro sees in the Romanesque is as often a break with symmetry as an affirmation of symmetry. Schapiro obviously believes that the Romanesque artist felt comfortable pushing at the pre-existing architectural or theological schemes, transforming what was given in a wide variety of ways.

It is one of the great strengths of Schapiro's thought that he can discern the psychological implications of forms and structures without insisting on some single rigid meaning. A discussion of the cross-legged posture of many figures in Romanesque art is especially exciting. Linda Seidel, in editing the Norton Lectures, has preserved the movement of Schapiro's speech, and it is a pleasure to listen in as he seizes an idea and expands on it. "The crossing of the legs in the Middle Ages," he says, "is not a posture of relaxation but a posture of tension, a posture—a self-inhibiting posture, a posture which expresses a great strain in the human being and is often associated with anger, as in figures of Herod and Nero. And above all, it is a posture which gives to the entire figure an aspect of paradox, of contradictoriness: an upper part which is stable and relaxed, the lower part which can barely maintain itself or which assumes an unnatural crossing and instability, and in a permanent manner." The way that Schapiro here lingers on a thought is wonderfully characteristic. A little later he pushes deeper into the psychological implications of the pose, suggesting that it "has something to do with feelings of guilt, feelings of regret, or some troubled state of the individual in which he is divided in his attitude, his response to his surroundings." And then, as Schapiro applies these general observations to specific cases, they are further complicated. He easily accepts contradictions. His approach, while beautifully open-ended, avoids the self-indulgence that so often cripples such broadly speculative thinking.

AT THE CORE OF ALL OF SCHAPIRO'S writings is a belief in the centrality of individual experience, whether it is the experience of an artist about whom we know a great deal, such as Leonardo or Picasso, or the largely anonymous artists who carved the façades of Romanesque churches and decorated the pages of Insular manuscripts. In 1947, in his essay "On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art," Schapiro argued that, as far back as the eleventh and twelfth centuries, churchmen had understood the impact that form and color might have on the individual. And in the last chapter of the Norton Lectures, devoted to images of animals in this art, Schapiro considers these beasts less as iconographic elements than as forces of nature that an individual responds to in absolutely human terms—to their ferocity, their alienness, their unexpected beauty. Even Schapiro's discussion of the emergence in the eleventh and twelfth centuries of sculptural programs on church façades is grounded in the idea of the individual. For he sees these façades as related to the growth of urban experience, which

Apertures

The herring had just run down the coast.
Their pearled roe clung to every nook and weed.
A frenzy of birds descended in their wake.
And following the birds, sea lions in heat, their song
across the water like a string bowed to tearing.
We too were drawn to the water's edge,
where the sea grew into all the rocks' depressions.
You peered into tide pools. I stumbled with my camera,
deciding how much to let in. Keep the shade that let
me see, one tiny pinhole against all this light, remain
unmoved? Or dial the aperture wide, and risk
the picture: join the mingling we were meant for.
In love, turn permeable, like the clouds in the southward sky
streaking up and up like the handwriting of an ecstatic.

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was characterized, like all urban life, by the development of the sense of the individual in relation to the group. The world that Schapiro describes in *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture* is one where there is a development of "new practical and secular interests," where individuals are beginning to act independently as they cultivate their "skills and ingenuity."

For the reader who is most sympathetic to Schapiro, this emphasis on the role of the individual can seem so natural as to scarcely require comment. But there are many scholars of art and literature who would argue that artistic style, both in its broadest outlines and its most specific forms, derives from social and historical pressures that the individual is scarcely able to comprehend, much less control. This critical view of Schapiro was articulated by the late art historian Michael Camille, in an issue of the *Oxford Art Journal* dedicated to Schapiro in 1994. "I can no longer say I believe," he wrote, "in some of the forces that Schapiro sees shaping Romanesque art, let alone the possibility of a totally individual expression, a free display of form or a genuinely original visual thought." Camille's argument is presented rather ironically, as if he were the naughty student ribbing the old professor, starting with his title: "How New York Stole the Idea of Romanesque Art."

Basically, Camille is saying that Schapiro has made the fatal error of reasoning backward from the sense of individualism that he knows in postwar American art, and has thereby created a badly distorted portrait of the anonymous artists of the Romanesque period. Where Schapiro might see an individual's feeling for wit and for the bizarre in certain Romanesque figures, Camille sees "not the beginnings of an artistic self-consciousness that will lead to de Kooning's fevered repaintings in a New York studio, but massive fear and self-abnegation, misogynistic monastic spirituality, bestiality and cruelty." For Camille, and for many other historians, what Schapiro sees as individual choice can be more accurately described as a cultural gestalt.

Class Action

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Schapiro was surely aware of this line of argument, with its underlying claim that all talk of individualism reflects modern bourgeois values; this idea was already coloring American academic thought when Schapiro gave the lectures on Romanesque art in the mid- to late 1960s. I think our awareness of these issues helps to explain why Schapiro labors so long and so hard to point out the particularity of the choices that were made by the Romanesque artists. It is Schapiro's argument that these choices are too specific, too idiosyncratic, to be explained by some argument about the general temper of the times. But it is also important to remember that these complex arguments about the origins of style are grounded in a fundamental philosophical disagreement. Schapiro's understanding of Romanesque art is based on an essential belief about humankind, namely that individuality—the sense of it, the yearning for it, the struggle for it—is quite simply the core of the human. This is the fundamental idea from which everything that he thought or wrote derives.

IV.

THIS BELIEF IN THE ESSENTIAL place of individuality in the making and the experiencing of art was powerfully articulated during the Renaissance, and took on a particular ferocity among the avant-garde movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with their Nietzschean faith in the individual will. The artists whom Schapiro knew in New York, de Kooning and Newman especially, may at moments have imagined that they were the freest artists who ever lived, operating as they did in a world where the academic traditions had no authority whatsoever. Yet this extraordinary freedom also provoked certain perplexities. If art was to this astonishing degree an expression of the subjectivity of the individual, then how was one to explain the timeless or transcendent quality in art, the more-than-individual power that characterized the greatest painting and sculpture?

The essential aesthetic question for mid-century New York was how to reconcile the radical subjectivity of artistic experience with the desire to create a visual language that was legible, comprehensible. This question, which drifted through the noisy discussions at the Artists' Club and the Cedar Tavern, preoccupied Schapiro as it preoccupied other writers of the time, among them Harold Rosenberg and Clement Greenberg. While Rosenberg, like Schapiro, was deeply attuned to the wide variety of pressures that contributed to the formation of a work of art, his grasp of the issues, full of dazzling intuitions, was far less searching than Schapiro's. It has become customary in writing about the mid-century years to juxtapose Greenberg and Rosenberg, but I think the far more revealing comparison is between Greenberg and Schapiro.

FOR BOTH GREENBERG AND Schapiro, coming of age meant overcoming the provincialism of the United States and embracing a cosmopolitan vision. And in the arts, to be cosmopolitan meant assimilating a broad, deep sense of quality. It was that sense of quality, experienced as a shock of recognition in the first flush of excitement over the works of Picasso and Matisse and Mondrian, that enabled these men to grasp the weakness of the social realist and American scene painting of the 1930s as well as the limitations of the minor Surrealists, whose fantastical inventions both Greenberg and Schapiro saw as a brand of luxuriant kitsch.

By the 1950s, however, as there were more and more judgments to be made about the claims of more and more avant-garde artists in the United States, it became increasingly important to develop some general account of the quality that one had first discerned in Picasso and Matisse and Mondrian. And by the 1960s, when the assertions of artistic individualism sometimes suggested a nihilistic vehemence, any account of the philosophic underpinnings of the sense of quality became ideologically fraught.

For Greenberg, the only way to confront an ever more confusing situation was to assert that quality was a unified, singular, simplified thing. Dismissing any attempt to celebrate the particularly literary or psychological power of a work of art, Greenberg declared that quality could be discerned only through a flash of intuition, an epiphany that folded form and content into an experience of "valuing, esthetic valuing." This was an experience that somehow eradicated all the particulars that the artist had created, even though it was also somehow grounded in those particulars. Arguing for a view of quality that owed much to Kant (although some of Greenberg's

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philosopher friends would question his grasp of Kant), Greenberg opted for a mystical idea of quality, for a moment of intuition, a revelation. Greenberg and his admirers were too astute to claim that the story in a painting by Poussin did not matter, or that it was trivial whether Rembrandt had painted his own son or a hired model; but they were fearful that if they gave too much importance to these things, they would find their way back to the literalism of American scene painting or the kitsch of Surrealism. And so what Greenberg opted for was a mystical marriage of form and content. As he said of a Mondrian, if it "didn't excel by its content, its form would have availed it nothing; if it didn't excel by its form, its content would have availed it nothing." Greenberg was championing an instinctive objectivity—an objectivity that, although Greenberg would probably not have put it this way, was grounded in an existentialist insistence on the absolute truth of the individual experience.

When Schapiro wrote a paper in 1966 titled "On Perfection, Coherence, and Unity of Form and Content," Greenberg's ideas were at the zenith (or just past the zenith) of their influence, and I think there is little doubt that Schapiro was responding to them. He begins by speaking of the idea of unity or perfection as rooted "in an immediate intuition of the structure of the whole"—which was precisely where Greenberg located quality. But Schapiro, while acknowledging the allure of such moments of revelation, hastens to observe that "the judgments of these qualities often change with continuing experience." Moreover, "they are never fully confirmed, but are sometimes invalidated by a single new observation." The richness of Schapiro's thinking owes something to his evident pleasure in the grandeur of ideas such as unity and coherence, and something to his deftness in showing how paradoxical such ideas are. He discusses cases where we experience works as whole or perfect, only to find out later that they are in fact fragments of larger works, or are not as the artists intended them to be.

"Perfection," Schapiro argues, is "a hypothesis," and if part of the pleasure of looking comes from measuring the particulars of a work against this hypothesis, the experience is anything but an instantaneous one; it is in fact a process of comparisons and reflections. For Schapiro, the story in a Poussin painting, the beauty of Poussin's color, and the arrangement of Poussin's forms are elements that one experiences sequentially, perhaps overlapping, but to imagine that they can all be conflated into one mystical moment—he does not accept that. "We do not see all of a work when we see it as a whole," he concludes. To do so would be to devalue the various aspects of the work. "One must be able to shift one's attitude in passing from part to part, from one aspect to another, and to enrich the whole progressively in successive perceptions."

If, for Greenberg, the individual seizes a moment of revelation, for Schapiro the individual makes a number of choices as to how to look. Aesthetic experience becomes a series of decisions, an evolving experience. The danger here is that the individual can be confronted with a nearly infinite range of choices. For Greenberg, Schapiro's approach might suggest an almost dizzying subjectivity, a freedom to look in so many ways and in so many directions that there is finally no center to the experience. Schapiro would respond, I think, that it is the work itself, the incontrovertible *thereness* of its colors, forms, shapes, and textures, that puts some limit on our subjectivity. The insistence with which Schapiro focuses on details in the lectures on Insular manuscripts is grounded in this idea, or so I believe. In the presence of the work of art, the individual can think and experience many things—we can think formally, psychologically, historically—but each of these reflections must be tested against the hard facts of the work of art. Schapiro insists upon the possibility of subjective experiences that do not dissolve into subjectivity, and his writings again and again demonstrate this possibility by example.

V.

In 1967, when Schapiro gave the Norton Lectures, his writings were probably being read with more eagerness and attentiveness than ever before. The ferment in the academic world in the late 1960s and 1970s made the multiplicity of approaches that Schapiro encouraged, his philosophical and methodological pluralism, extremely attractive. At a time when socialist and leftist and Marxist ideas of one kind or another were circulating in the universities, his long-running interest in the social aspects of art—beginning with his emphasis on interpreting Impressionist paintings as a reflection of bourgeois experience—was immensely suggestive to younger art historians. His work in his lectures on Impressionism and in his essay "Courbet and Popular Imagery," where Courbet's naturalism is related to the simplified structural forms of popular art and children's art, shaped a generation of art historians; by now there is a long shelf of panoramic studies of the relationship between art and society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that would be unimaginable without Schapiro's example. At the very same time, however, Schapiro was presenting papers on semiotics and structuralist approaches to works of art, which helped to inaugurate a new systematic approach to formalist thinking that would influence yet another generation of art historians.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Schapiro's work suggested to many the astonishing power that art historians might have if they only availed themselves of all the analytical tools at their disposal. To some, his rather circumspect studies in the sociology and semiotics of art opened vast fields of study, suggesting projects that had some of the grandeur that once characterized the work of Riegl and Wölfflin. Yet I think there was something else that Schapiro wanted to tell his colleagues, something that they were perhaps less eager to hear. The very range of his approaches, his willingness to devote extraordinary energy to apparently obscure problems, suggested a supreme humility before the work of art, a belief that no one approach could do justice to the complexity of even a good—much less a great—work of art. Far from imagining that semiotics or sociology could offer a complete understanding of art, Schapiro seemed to believe that every perception that we have about a work of art is partial, an idea among ideas. And it is this insistence on treating insights discretely, on not weaving everything together into

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one thing, that brings us to the essence of Schapiro's thought.

Schapiro was far from being the only art historian of his time who could write acutely about formal matters. Erwin Panofsky, in his book on Titian, offers passages of formal analysis as sensitive as anything Schapiro ever produced; but whereas for Panofsky the formal analysis of the various phases in Titian's work becomes one aspect of a larger edifice, Schapiro tended to want such observations to stand apart. He wanted the discrete elements of interpretation to retain their stand-alone power, their individual authority. While Panofsky would attempt a complete portrait of a person or a period in his books on Dürer and early Netherlandish painting, Schapiro preferred the largeness of a near infinity of partial views. Like his friend de Kooning, who had once observed that "content is a glimpse," Schapiro built a world out of glimpses, deep, penetrating glimpses, glimpses of many different things seen in many different ways. In this accretion of viewpoints—in his lectures on Impressionism they range from close observations of brushwork to considerations of literature, science, and sociology—Schapiro built up a sense of experience as inexhaustibly rich.

In the limitless variety of his conversation and his lectures, in the variegated nature of the writings that he published while he was alive, and in the mingling of severity and exhilaration with which he approached the grandest philosophic ideas—in all of this Schapiro may resemble, more than any art historian of his time, a figure in the world of philosophy. I am referring to Isaiah Berlin, the great philosopher of pluralism. Schapiro and Berlin had been friends since the 1940s. Schapiro attended the Mellon Lectures on Romanticism that Berlin gave in 1965. (In the midst of a correspondence provoked by Schapiro's critical essay on Bernard Berenson, Berlin, who had a far more favorable impression of the old aesthete, observed to Schapiro that "I believe in your capacity for discovering the truth much more than in my own.") Both men united a passion for the cosmopolitan culture of the West with an unabashed connection with their Jewish roots, and somehow sustained the optimism of the best of the old Enlightenment ideals in the face of the horrors of the twentieth century. Certain of Schapiro's essays, such as "On the Humanity of Abstract Painting," have exerted precisely the kind of deep, almost spiritual influence that we know from some of Berlin's writings. And both Schapiro and Berlin, since their deaths, have been the subjects of a considerable number of posthumous publications, collections of writings and lectures that they obviously hesitated to publish during their lifetimes. These friends both loved the printed word so much, they were so acutely aware of its power, that they believed they must be completely ready before they took the plunge. For Schapiro, as for Berlin, it was always important to have the other side of the story, to affirm a fundamentally liberal belief in the essential place of variety and variability in human experience.

If Schapiro's work looks more elusive now than it did during his lifetime, it is because the more we read him, the more multi-faceted his vision becomes. The work of art always takes the starring role in this complicated movement of thought and feeling. The limestone carving or the manuscript page or the oil painting is absolutely there, an undeniable fact, at once the product of an individual act of will and an object to which we bring the full range of our experience. Schapiro joins the freedom of art to the freedom of the individual through a constant vibration of sympathy and understanding. His prose, which initially beguiles with its modesty and its mildness, has a gathering power, a precision and a lucidity that finally suggests a poetic play of possibilities. He reframes the grandiose dreams of European art within the democratic vistas of the United States, and without in any way distorting the art of the Old World or of the art of the New. If there is a unity to Meyer Schapiro's writings, it is that when taken together they comprise an unprecedented celebration of the varieties of artistic experience. ■

Simon Blackburn
Up From Bullshit

ON TRUTH
By Harry Frankfurt
(Alfred A. Knopf, 101 pp., $12.50)

I.

IN HIS PRIME, AND WITHOUT BENefit of a keyboard, Samuel Johnson could write twelve thousand words a day. I doubt that there are many more than half that number in Harry Frankfurt's diminutive book *On Bullshit*, which was an unexpected bestseller for Princeton University Press last year, shyly peeking out next to the cash registers in bookshops everywhere. Evidently the commercial giant Knopf wanted to get in on the act, and the result is this almost equally tiny book, nicely positioned for a similar success this Christmas, since there is an announced first printing of 200,000 copies. Its appearance and its design make it almost identical to its hot little predecessor: at 101 baby pages, *On Truth* appears to be fractionally longer, but *On Bullshit* buttressed itself with as many as nine footnotes and this book contains none.

One can see why publishers love the miniature, especially when such mouthwatering sales are in their sights. Production and editorial costs must be almost invisible. Even the tardiest author can be expected to produce this amount of copy to a deadline, since one would need a thick skin to trot out the standard excuses of illness, family, competing duties, and the rest to explain delays in what could scarcely be more than a week's work. And there are some subjects well-suited to treatment in a short essay, subjects on which a brief meditation is all we require. We enjoy a few carefully chosen reflections, an aphorism or an insight we might not have managed for ourselves, perhaps a dusting of academic icing in the shape of a quotation or two, and so to bed. The tone of such writing is fairly uniform: confidential, humane, amused, civilized, and leisured. *The Oxford Book of Essays*, which I have open in front of me, includes such titles as "Thoughts in Westminster Abbey" (Addison), "The Plumber" (Trollope), "The Departure of a Guest" (Bel-

Simon Blackburn is professor of philosophy at the University of Cambridge and the author of TRUTH: A GUIDE *(Oxford University Press).*

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loc), and "Well Informed Circles and How to Move in Them" (Waugh). It also contains Swift's acidic take on the meditations of Robert Boyle: "A Meditation Upon a Broom-Stick." But it reminds us that the great essayists include philosophers too, such as Montaigne and Hume, as well as the various masters of satire and whimsy.

Bullshit is a paradigm of an essay-sized subject. Frankfurt's first book worked so well because it maintained a tone of clinical academic gravity in dealing with an essentially ludicrous topic. The oratorical rotundity with which it chased an Aristotelian definition of bullshit increased the humor, and was perfectly matched by the schoolmasterly rebukes it issued to previous authorities for getting it wrong. And then, perhaps to our surprise, the quest succeeded. Frankfurt put his finger on the essential characteristic of the bullshitter, which distinguishes him from the liar. The latter is concerned to communicate something false as if it is true. The former is indifferent to whether what he communicates is true or false. It is this blithe unconcern that distinguishes the bullshit artist; whether as a result he is merely amusing or a serious menace varies from case to case. We might not have been able to formulate this difference for ourselves, but we recognize it as true when we see it. So the meditation was successful, the balance of amusement and insight was perfect, and we parted company with the author, perhaps an hour or so after picking up the work, happier and wiser than before.

HAS THE TRICK BEEN REPEATED with the current essay? Truth is bigger game than bullshit. Truth and its agent, reason, are the kings of the philosophical jungle, and their capture has excited the finest minds. It is a brave thing for a philosopher to try to bring them down with a little essay—like hunting an elephant, or, better, a herd of elephants, with a pea shooter. Frankfurt explains that his book arose because he had failed to explain in the previous book why truth is so important to us, or why we should especially care about it, and hence had failed to explain why indifference to truth is such a bad thing. This is the task he now undertakes.

But he also sets himself some quite definite limits in so doing. In his introduction, he first disclaims any intention of confronting directly those who represent themselves as denying that the distinction between true and false is a "valid" one or that it "corresponds to any objective reality." It seems from this that postmodernists, who are supposed here to make just this denial, can breathe freely. Second, he is going to avoid any engagement with attempts to define truth, instead just taking for granted a commonsense understanding of the notion. Third, he is going to avoid meditating upon the pleasures of settling questions or the joys of seeing that a theorem holds or that a conclusion follows, that a question is now done and dusted. Taken together, these represent a fairly dramatic shrinkage of the boundaries of the discussion. It is a contraction that might be regretted as excluding such diverse predecessors as Plato, Hegel, Nietzsche, Peirce, Tarski, Foucault, or Richard Rorty. It is not clear to what extent Frankfurt then operates entirely within the limits he has set himself: at any rate, the villainous postmodernists are vigorously assaulted and roundly dismissed immediately, in the very first chapter, and there is subsequent work on the joys of truth, based on Spinoza.

THE GROUND FOR FRANKFURT'S defense of the value of truth lies, as he himself admits, in a banal thought, which is that truth is useful: "How could a society that cared too little for truth make sufficiently well-informed judgments and decisions concerning the most suitable disposition of its public business?" Or, as he later puts it, the problem with ignorance and error is that they leave us in the dark, merely guessing, flying blind, mindlessly groping. They leave our vaunted rationality useless, since without information to work on we can make no reliable inferences and no worthwhile plans, and sooner or later we will get tripped up. From this banal thought it is but a short step to appreciating truthfulness as indeed a virtue, and to recognizing the dangers represented by the liar or even the bullshitter.

And that's pretty much it. Frankfurt adds a little, but that is the core of his message. One thing he adds is a thought from Spinoza, who argued that the augmentation of the ability to live and to fulfil our nature is felt as a joy, and joy in turn begets love; hence we are driven to love truth because it increases this power to live "authentically," or in accordance with our nature. And conversely we will be driven to distrust and dislike people who are out to deceive us, or just careless of the truth, since they represent a threat to that ability, and therefore a threat to our very selves. Frankfurt nicely expands on this, talking of the sense of assault that we experience when we find that we have been deceived, or even the sense of becoming a little crazy. A useful thought experiment in this connection, which Frankfurt does not mention, is Robert Nozick's "experience machine," which hooks us into a virtual reality or a fool's paradise in which we wrongly take all our desires to have been fulfilled and all our wishes to have been met, and continuously experience life as if they have been. Spinoza perhaps explains why most of us would choose not to step into such a machine and live the resultant lie. Yet if we lived in a world in which such machines existed and were so carefully designed that the joy they gave us enhanced our vitality to the utmost, and if there were no moment of rude awakening, we might abandon our reluctance as an outdated prejudice.

Another addition comes very late, in fact six pages before the end of the book. Frankfurt recognizes that the instrumental defense of truth may only get us part of the way. It is too piecemeal. It defends truths in the plural, one at a time. The engineer or the doctor wants particular discrete facts, without which he cannot design a structure or cure a patient, but he need not care about "truth *as such*." Having raised this question, and with only four pages left, Frankfurt embarks on a chase to find out what might be meant by caring about truth as such. It might mean valuing curiosity, or "appreciating that truths are important to us," or in other words, once more, caring about truth because of its utility. But there is more than that. In the final lines of the book we learn that it lies in the link between recognizing stubborn factuality, the part of the world that cannot be molded by our wills or wishes, and recognizing ourselves: "It is only through our recognition of a world of stubbornly independent reality, fact, and truth that we come both to recognize ourselves as beings distinct from others and to articulate the specific nature of our own identities." And this makes it impossible not to care about truth as such.

I was not sure about this final peroration. I quite see that to get a sense of itself the baby or the infant needs to rec-

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ognize some difference between the bits of the world over which it can exercise immediate control and those which are by contrast annoyingly stubborn. Self-consciousness requires this contrast between self and world. But I couldn't see why this immediately supported a concern for "truth as such," going beyond the quotidian concerns for facts, one at a time, that are essential to the doctor or engineer. Moreover, it seems to me that when they are "articulating the specific nature of their own identities," people are particularly prone to fantasy and wishful thinking, and truth scarcely gets a look in. In *Truth and Truthfulness*, Bernard Williams argued that the very notion of historical truth itself has a history, arising some time between Herodotus and Thucydides, so that ancient Greek identity was largely articulated through stories that straddled the gap between myth and history, with the question of factuality and truth lying comfortably fallow. Religious identities evidently do the same, not only when they clash with science, but typically with the story of how God gave us—and us in particular, rather than those inferior folks next door—his message. These stories inhabit exactly the same uncultivated field where people avert their eyes from the question of whether it is true or why they think it is true, in favor of being swept up by the myth and entering a relaxed collaboration with the flattering elements of the story.

National identities are similarly notorious playing fields for fiction and myth. The Scottish short kilt and clan tartan are integral to many peoples' conception of themselves as the glorious inheritors of a wild, free, romantic past, although neither existed before the eighteenth century. These are areas where what it is useful to believe may part dramatically from what is true, and where large swaths of humanity prefer to go with the first.

II.

READING FRANKFURT'S BOOK, I worried that without chapter and verse the unnamed postmodernists who are so enthusiastically vilified might feel they have not been given their day in court. Of course, postmodernism is something of a whipping boy these days, and many readers may feel that no insult is too gross to heap on it. It arouses the same horror that used to be directed at idealism and skepticism. The same Samuel Johnson who could write so prolifically thought that he was making a sound philosophical point by kicking a stone and declaiming: "Thus I refute Berkeley!" G.E. Moore got the same effect by holding up his hand and declaring that he was more certain of his hand than of any philosophical argument that purported to cast doubt on it—which allegedly prompted Wittgenstein to remark that Berkeley had never intended to deny that his underpants continued to exist after he had put his trousers on over them.

Similarly, I do not think there was any recent philosophical movement that could have been stopped in its tracks by pointing out that it is easier to find your way about in daylight than in the dark, or that if someone tells you that a bottle contains gin and you act accordingly, you have a beef against him if it contains kerosene. Individuals, on occasion, might have carelessly let loose remarks that seem to imply the opposite, but I think these were rhetorical lapses rather than central doctrines to which they were wedded, and they probably misspoke themselves as they tried to say something more interesting. Easy triumphalism is always to be avoided in philosophy.

The doctrines of individual postmodernists may have varied, but the epicenter was surely the idea, as old as Protagoras, that man is the measure of all things. This means that there is no single way the world requires to be understood, and no process of science or history that is free from the engagement of the prepared mind. Even if the world were an open book—which it is not—books require reading; and reading requires intelligence; and intelligence requires language, learning, acculturation, tradition, and their innumerable influences on our resulting nature. Postmodernism recognizes that many of these influences can be expected to vary from person to person, place to place, time to time, class to class, gender to gender, tradition to tradition. Books require reading, and what they can then expect to get are readings, in the plural. What postmodernism then does with this thought is itself open to interpretation. Some may conclude that "anything goes," but that is unwarranted and untenable. Others may merely counsel increased awareness and toleration, a message with which it is hard to disagree, as is the message—in the light of what William James called the trail of the human serpent everywhere—that dogmatism, and the bigotry of certainty, might be soft-pedaled a little.

Why is it not true that anything goes? The answer is that among the cacophony of different readings there may be some that are better tuned to the way the world is or better adapted for finding that way. To take a fairly clear example, geologists derive their knowledge of the age of things from a principle of uniformity—that where a feature is explicable by processes that happen and take time now, then it is right to suppose that it happened in the same way and took a similar amount of time then. A creationist may contest this, but the creationist will rely on the same principle—to judge the age of the white-haired gentleman in front of him, or to date his holy texts, or to say how long ago was the landing on Plymouth Rock. In rejecting the geology, he is making exceptions from rules that he generally accepts. And this cannot in turn be a habit adapted to finding the way of the world, since such habits will lead to inconsistent results—the holy text that for you trumps scientific method will likely disagree with the sacred oracle that for another person does so. Reliance on uniformities, without arbitrary exceptions, emerges as the only rational option.

Scientific method is one thing, and in spite of this fairly simple example it is a very complex one. But it gives us a field where we can hope for rational convergence. The pressure of experience is itself enough to flatten out any differences in the variously prepared minds that come to the problems of science. The political importance of all this may be more evident when we consider matters with more human content: not so much Berkeley's underwear, or the gin or kerosene in the bottle, but religious, political, moral, and historical interpretations of who we are, where we have been, and where to go. Here convergence is less certain.

CONSIDER THE VERY NICE STORY Frankfurt deploys against the dreaded postmodernism, of Clemenceau's comment when asked to speculate what future historians might say about World War I: "They will not say that Belgium invaded Germany." A good remark, and here we have, it is suggested, a stick of certainty planted in Heraclitus's river, a fixed point imagined to be immune to the vagaries of historical interpretation. It may be so.

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But if so, it is lucky. Compare that remark with one that across some of the world would appear just as immovable, that Iraq did not invade the United States. I, certainly, affirm that. But I can imagine contexts in which it is contested, and indeed inflammatory. I can certainly imagine historians, albeit ones with whom I have issues, denying it, and claiming instead that September 11 constituted an invasion, and one from a force in which Iraq had, in their view, a responsible role; and that therefore it is not wholly false, but perhaps insightful and suggestive, to say that it did.

We are all aware that one man's preemptive strike is another man's unprovoked attack, one man's theft is another man's just restitution, one man's terrorism is another man's struggle for freedom, one man's law is another man's state oppression. Which side to take may be obvious to you and me, here, now; but there is no description to be made while escaping the human plight of having to take sides. There is no evading the burden of judgment. And if that is true even when quite sober—some might say empirical—questions of history and political fact are at issue, do not expect it to go away when questions of ideology, of morals, of religion, or of destiny are on the platform. We often deceive ourselves if we think that they have left the platform, as Foucault's *The History of Madness*, that founding postmodern text, made abundantly clear.

Perhaps postmodernism, at least in the popular mind, included the idea that what I have called the burden of judgment must inevitably paralyze judgment, as if awareness of the dark contingencies that help mold the ways we make up our minds must inevitably undermine any attempt to do so. This essentially adolescent idea is most notoriously represented in the philosophical tradition by some of the more spittle-encrusted bits of Nietzsche, although the line of thought goes back to the Greek skeptics. But at his best even Nietzsche drew rein and acknowledged that we must carry on, and carry on responsibly, advancing our best interpretations of the world in the light of the best our histories and traditions have left us. Nietzsche can be interpreted as a light ironist, unable to put his shoulder to any conclusion about anything, but only by ignoring some of his most impassioned and engaged attempts to understand what was implicit in his own metaphor of our perspective on the world.

After all, a perspective is a good thing. The adolescent mistake is to suppose that with perspective comes illusion, or that with the recognition of the inevitable presence of perspective comes the conclusion that no view is as good as any view. Plato himself saw that the uninformed view, the mere glimpse afforded to the sightseer, is inferior to others, such as our most careful view formed by the methods that have proved themselves, over time, to be better at representing how things stand. Postmodernists may protest that these methods at best select beliefs which happen to commend themselves to us, or which enable us to cope, not ones that have any additional virtue of truth. That is an elephant that requires more than a pea shooter to bring it down. And even if we manage that in some places, we still face those awkward patches where illusions appear to serve us well, and truth and utility diverge.

SPINOZA IS THE ONLY PHILOSOpher or writer named or acknowledged in Frankfurt's book. I found myself made uncomfortable by this, even given the demands of miniaturization. Frankfurt does not mention that the same Clemenceau story was deployed with the same purpose by Bernard Williams, in the landmark book that I have already mentioned. It has been repeated, with due acknowledgment, in at least one book on the topic of truth published since then. Frankfurt may not have read Williams's book, and he may have found the anecdote elsewhere, or he may simply have forgotten where he learned it, but I found the omission unfortunate. It is a discomfort similar to that arising from the way the unnamed postmodernists are treated. And when I think of Frankfurt's resolute silence about the philosophical tradition from, say, Protagoras onward, I confess to scenting a whiff of something like—well, negligence with the truth, an affectation of amateur carelessness adopted to mislead or manipulate the audience, and which therefore, by Frankfurt's own account, characterizes the bullshitter.

This is undoubtedly too harsh. "Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?" as Pope rebuked himself when he talked of Lord Hervey. The essayist has privileges that the philosopher cannot claim. And I am not asserting that truth is so extensive and well-ploughed and contentious a subject that it must never be treated with abbreviation, let alone with a light touch, elegance, or wit. In fact, the very first essay in the Oxford anthology is called "Of Truth." It is only a line or two short of two pages long. And on its first page Sir Francis Bacon approaches the question that occupies Frankfurt at the end of his book, cutting to the chase with a vengeance (not that Bacon was unaware of the banal pragmatic properties of truth, as he in fact coined the aphorism that knowledge is power).

Bacon approaches the value of truth as such by asking the reverse question of why some people sometimes love falsity, telling us that one of the later school of the Greeks "examineth the matter, and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies, where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant, but for the lie's sake." Bacon says that he cannot tell, but he then points out that "this same truth is a naked and open daylight, that doth not shew the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candlelights." We need an admixture of falsehood, and there are things about which we are ignorant, and fortunately so: "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure." And then to illustrate what he means, he poses the great question: "Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?"

I certainly do not doubt it. I know of a very good man, described by many as a holy man, a former chaplain of my college, who lost his faith through meditating on John 16:13: "When he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth," which he called the most terrifying words in the New Testament. We pay lip service to the value of truth as such, but we also fear that too much might not be good for us, or might actually destroy us. Again, utility sits uneasily with truth; we need an explanation of how the virtue of truth can take on a life of its own and stand opposed to pragmatism, or of how we first learned to separate the question of whether a signal represented how things stand from the question of whether it was a signal that it was expedient for us to hear. But such questions would provoke more than a cute diversion to pick up at the exit to a bookstore. ■

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BROOKLYN DIARIST

Well Met

IT'S PROBLEMATIC FOR ME THIS year, especially as a Jew, but I can't stand the Mets. Depending on your conception of when life begins, I attended my first Yankee game either six months in utero or three months out of the womb, and I've never looked back. Unfortunately, during my formative years, the Yanks were a fairly dismal team, and the Mets were the toast of the schoolbus; I was six when they rolled to the 1986 world championship, their first in almost two decades. The other (mostly Jewish) Yankee fans in my Canarsie elementary school switched their caps from navy blue to sky blue in a heartbeat, unable to withstand the power of the city's zeal for the coked-up, brawling, working-class team from Queens. Not me. It helped that the Mets were facing the hated Boston Red Sox, but I opted to stay neutral, changing the subject to how Dave Righetti would be unhittable next year for the Yanks.

THIS YEAR IT'S MUCH, MUCH HARDER. First, the Mets are managed by an idol of mine, the great Yankee second baseman Willie Randolph. It was his number, 30, that I sported when I became my little league team's starting second baseman. Second, the Mets are a towering force that any baseball fan has to respect. Despite palpable pitching weaknesses (Steve Trachsel, the injured Pedro Martínez and Orlando Hernández, the inconsistent Billy Wagner), they're able to turn any opposing pitcher's mistake into an orgy of run production, all through their lineup. The Mets coasted to win the National League (NL) East—the first time in eleven years that the division hasn't gone to the Atlanta Braves—and, last week, dispatched their toughest opponents, the Los Angeles Dodgers, in a three-game sweep. Two years ago, the Mets were pitiful. Now, they're World Series contenders and arguably the best team in baseball.

BUT THERE'S A THIRD REASON IT'S HARD not to root for the Mets: a slugging and Gold Glove–winning right-fielder named Shawn Green. In late August, the Mets acquired Green from the Arizona Diamondbacks. Despite the team's preexisting wealth of charismatic young talent—the rookies José Reyes, Lastings Milledge, David Wright, and the superstar Carlos Beltrán—Green immediately became the toast of the city. Or at least, the toast of Borough Park, Midwood, parts of Flatbush, the Upper West Side, Rego Park, Flushing, and Riverdale. That's because Shawn Green is a Jew. And if you, as a Jew, don't become a Mets Believer—what a *shonda*!

GREEN CAME TO QUEENS ON AUGUST 23. Almost immediately, Jewish New York, forever on the lookout for an heir to Sandy Koufax as the repository for Jewish sporting dreams, lionized him. It took less than a week for a near-pornographic profile to appear in *The New York Times*. The piece opened with a description of a fan's poster, which read THE MESSIAH HAS ARRIVED. When a Manhattanite named Joshua Ostrovsky witnessed Green knock in a run with an opposite-field single to left, he told the *Times*, "I haven't been this proud of a Jew since my brother's bar mitzvah." A question overtook New York: Would Green break the record set by Hank Greenberg back in the 1930s and 1940s for most home runs hit by a Jewish player? The *Times*'s Murray Chass tracked down Greenberg's son, who gave Green his blessing. Even though Shawn Green hasn't even been bar mitzvahed, it seems that, every time he steps into the batter's box, he sanctifies the Name.

IT'S NOT THAT GREEN ISN'T A GOOD player—he is, despite a mediocre performance in the NL Division Series. But Green isn't the issue. Jews are. It's absolutely absurd for anyone to obsess over the fact that Hank Greenberg hit 331 home runs. That makes Greenberg eighty-ninth on the all-time home-run list. Why on earth would any Mets fan want Green to steal the crown of eighty-ninth-best home-run hitter? If you're a real Mets fan, you should want Green to go after the other Hank—you know, Aaron. Ah, but Greenberg was a tribesman, so his circumcision somehow raises his marginal statistic to a feat of greatness. If that doesn't patronize Jewish athletic achievement, what does? Certainly Greenberg thought so. His son told Chass that Greenberg wanted to be known as a slugger, not a Jewish slugger: "I don't think of myself that way," he quoted his father as saying. "I think of myself in terms of Gehrig, DiMaggio, and Williams."

IT'S TOO MUCH TO ASK THAT SPORTS live up to the promise of social solidarity: all fans—no matter white or black, Jew or gentile—rooting for their city against all rivals, investing great players with emotion and pathos based on ability, not heritage. The real world of fandom, sadly, isn't like that. But tribalism is especially sad when it's mixed with a deep sense of ethnic inferiority, as it is when Diaspora Jews devote their attention to any act of physical exertion. A crucial aspect of the early Zionist project was to propose the redemptive physicality of their program as a solution to what is in fact internalized anti-Semitism. Hayyim Nahman Bialik's seminal 1903 poem, "In The City of Slaughter," mercilessly blamed the victims of the brutal Kishinev pogrom for not taking up arms in resistance. My boss, Franklin Foer, described in his book, *How Soccer Explains The World*, the European "muscular Judaism" movement contemporaneous with Bialik, a gym-rat self-improvement ethos that reeks of self-loathing. "We want to restore to the flabby Jewish body its lost tone, to make it vigorous and strong, nimble and powerful," wrote movement founder Max Nordau. Not to be outdone, there's Rich Cohen's sorry tome *Tough Jews*, which exalted as model Yids the thuggish gangsters that my colleague and fellow Brooklynite Leon Wieseltier once insightfully termed "sick fucks."

THAT'S NOT TO SAY THAT SHAWN Green's fanbase is rabid. Only when he steps to the plate on Shabbos—and bat on Shabbos he does. And to confess fully: I'll be part of Green's citywide *minyan* during the postseason, assuming the Mets advance past St. Louis to take on Detroit in the World Series. And I'll have a question to ask Green's Hebrews when he gets up to bat: Should the Yanks get Righetti to replace Ron Guidry as their pitching coach? Consider it revenge for Canarsie.

SPENCER ACKERMAN

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Myths About the Israeli-Arab Conflict (II)

Is there such a thing as the "cycle of violence"?

In a recent one of our *hasbarah* (educating and clarifying) messages, we described how untruths and misinformation advanced by the Arabs have made many people, even well-intentioned ones, believe this propaganda. In that installment, we addressed the myth of "occupation" and its being the alleged cause of the conflict between Arabs and Israelis. Today, we look at another myth – repeated over and over again – that of the "cycle of violence."

What are the facts?

The myth of the "cycle of violence." Our government, the media and many people refer to and deplore the acts of violence raging between Israelis and Arabs. They believe that if that "cycle" could somehow be broken, peace and good will would prevail. But there is no such "cycle." The Israelis, always exercising much restraint, are often forced to respond to such violence in order to protect their civilian population and their installations and infrastructure. Ask yourself how many Palestinian civilians have intentionally been killed by the Israelis? The answer is zero, nobody! And then ask yourself, how many Israeli civilians have been intentionally targeted and killed by the Arabs during that same period. The answer is: all of them! Any Palestinian civilian killed by Israel is an unintended victim. The Palestinians, on the other hand, target only Israeli civilians – shoppers in stores, teenagers in discotheques, celebrants at a bar mitzvah, a wedding, or a Passover Seder, or innocents riding in buses or other public transportation. The restraint of the Israelis in the face of never-ending provocation is almost unbelievable. What other country in the world would continue to suffer such sustained damage, such loss of life, without making every effort to eliminate its source? The sense of ethics that inspires the Israeli government and the Jewish people and, to be sure, also the pressure of public opinion, prevents Israel from unleashing its military potential and obliterating its tormentors once and for all. In the worst enemy attack on our country, the outrage of September 11, 2001, 3,000 Americans died. Our country, justifiably, went into full attack mode. Regrettably, our enemies are elusive, and we cannot bring our military might to bear on them. We certainly would do so and do so mercilessly if we could. The over 1,000 civilian Israeli dead so far as a result of the current Palestinian "intifada," correspond to about 65,000 American victims. Does anybody think that we would stand idly by if that were to happen to us? Of course not! What degree of forbearance does the world expect of Israel?

> "Had [the Palestinians] accepted the hand of friendship and peace that Israel has extended so many times... the concept of the 'cycle of violence' would have never arisen."

Evacuation of Gaza in vain. Bowing to bad advice and the pressure of public opinion, Israel evacuated Gaza – not a single Israeli soldier or civilian remains there. But instead of the expected peace, violence erupted almost immediately. Israel was and continues to be subject to almost daily rocket attacks. In a most serious incident, the Gazans dug a tunnel into Israel, attacked an Israeli patrol, killed two Israeli soldiers and kidnapped one. An even more serious incident occurred on Israel's northern border. In order to promote peace, Israel abandoned the southern Lebanon security strip, which it had maintained as a buffer against Hizbollah (the "party of God"). In a daring raid, Hizbollah invaded Israel, killed eight soldiers and kidnapped two. A violent war erupted as a result, during which Hizbollah launched thousands of sophisticated Iran-supplied rockets against Israel. It brought about enormous destruction and hundreds of dead in both Lebanon and Israel.

There is no "cycle of violence." There is only the very measured response of the Israeli military to defend its civilian population and its vital installations against unending attacks by the Arabs. They are prepared to sacrifice their lives and that of their children and are willing to go to any lengths to achieve their goal of destroying Israel.

The Arab-Israel conflict has raged for almost 100 years. Israel has had to defend itself against attacks since the very day of its birth – and before. It has sustained casualties that, in proportion to its population, are far higher than that of any country in modern times, even those engaged in open warfare. The hatred of the Arabs against the Jews is bottomless. They will stop at nothing to inflict damage or, if possible, obliterate and "wipe Israel off the map." The Palestinians live in abject misery, their economy is in shambles, and their youths, having not learned much more than the Koran, violence, and "martyrdom," face a hopeless future. Had they accepted the offered partition of the country in 1948, or had they accepted the hand of friendship and peace that Israel has extended so many times since, they could now have had their own state, perhaps for as long as the Israelis – since 1948. They could have an advanced, peaceful and prosperous society, just as that of Israel, in partnership with and next to it. The concept of the "cycle of violence" would have never arisen.

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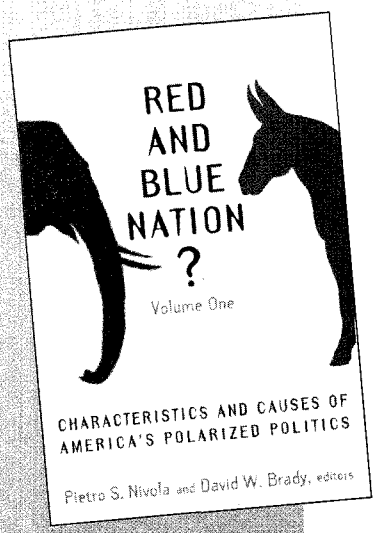
Critical Readings from Hoover Institution Fellows

Red and Blue Nation?

Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics

EDITED BY PIETRO S. NIVOLA AND DAVID W. BRADY



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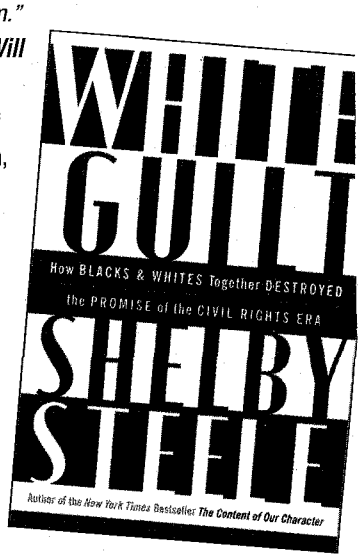
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GUILT
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the PROMISE of the CIVIL RIGHTS ERA
SHELBY
STEELE
Author of the New York Times Bestseller The Content of Our Character

In 1955 the murderers of Emmett Till, a black Mississippi youth, were acquitted of their crime, undoubtedly because they were white. Forty years later, O. J. Simpson, whom many thought would be found guilty of murder by virtue of the DNA evidence against him, went free after his attorney portrayed him as a victim of racism. Clearly, a sea change has taken place in American culture, but how did it happen? In this important new work, distinguished race relations scholar Shelby Steele argues that the age of white supremacy has given way to an age of white guilt—and neither that has been good for African Americans.

Shelby Steele is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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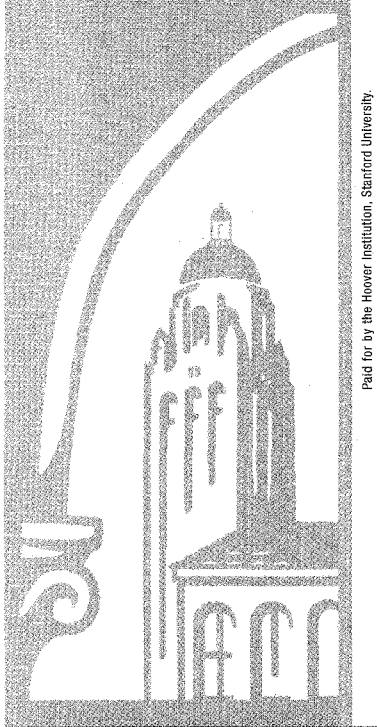

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